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# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A PLATFORM FOR THE FREE DISCUSSION OF  
ISSUES IN THE FIELD OF RELIGION AND  
THEIR BEARING ON EDUCATION

MARCH - APRIL 1952



*In Memoriam*

GEORGE ALBERT COE

# Religious Education

*Official Publication of the Religious Education Association*

Seeks to present, on an adequate, scientific plane, those factors which make for improvement in religious and moral education. The Journal does not defend particular points of view, contributors alone being responsible for opinions expressed in their articles. It gives its authors entire freedom of expression, without any official endorsement. Articles in Religious Education are indexed in the EDUCATION INDEX which is on file in educational institutions and public libraries.

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## THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION APPROACHES ITS FIFTIETH YEAR

George Albert Coe was the outstanding religious educator of the first half of the twentieth century. His long and active life and his creative thought are inextricably interwoven with those years. He met the problems of his days in such a spirit and with such resources that the patterns of thought which he molded are still being used in a vital manner and bid fare to be used for years to come.

His long life as teacher, writer, and crusader for the cause of liberal thought and aggressive action in education and religion has inspired his contemporaries while blazing a trail for leaders of future generations.

His professional life was woven inseparably into that of the Religious Education Association. He was one of the Founders of the Association in 1903 and identified himself with its program for the nearly fifty years of its history.

It is altogether appropriate that this issue of *Religious Education* should be dedicated as a memorial to his life and work.

All of us would wish that Dr. Coe might have lived to join the Religious Education Association family in celebrating the 50th Anniversary in 1953. We would wish the same for Harrison S. Elliott. Two of our strong leaders have been lost to us within the same year. Their lives will live after them, but their places as leaders must be filled by others. In one sense no person can succeed another in a particular position of responsibility. Differences of personality, approach and of conviction place the stamp of individuality upon the work of each. It is the genius of the R.E.A. to draw out from each individual that which distinguishes him at his work at his best.

The Religious Education Association is approaching its 50th Anniversary. This should be made an occasion worthy of the accomplishments of a half century and a time for meeting the problems of these years as our former leaders met theirs in their years. It is planned to publish a 50th Anniversary Volume containing contributions from a number of Association members. As we review the list of contributors to "In Memoriam To George Albert Coe" and recall others who might have participated had space in this magazine permitted, we are encouraged in undertaking the preparation and publication of the 50th Anniversary Volume.

Dr. George Albert Coe's contribution to the Religious Education Association is immeasurable, and he freely acknowledged his indebtedness to the Association. Could there be a more appropriate memorial to him than to enter upon the second half of a century with the conviction that the work of the Religious Education Association will be carried on. There are heights still to be attained.

We are grateful for the leadership of George Albert Coe.

SAMUEL P. FRANKLIN,  
*President, Religious Education Association*

This issue is divided into four parts. The first part consists of articles about George Albert Coe. In the second part are listed his writings. The third part has selected writings of Dr. Coe. And the fourth part consists of two pages of pictures of George A. Coe.

To the writers of memorial articles we are thankful for their cooperation.

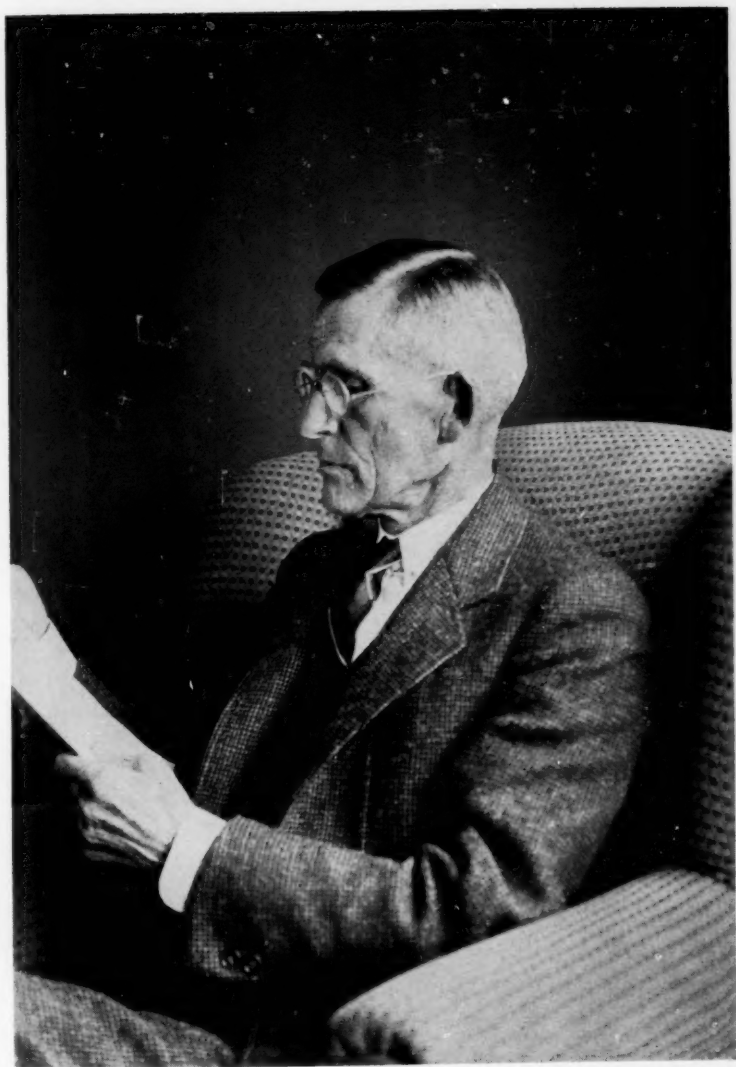
To the Edward W. Hazen Foundation for a generous contribution which made possible the enlargement of this issue of the magazine we are grateful.

To the various magazines which granted special permission to reprint articles of George Albert Coe we acknowledge our indebtedness.

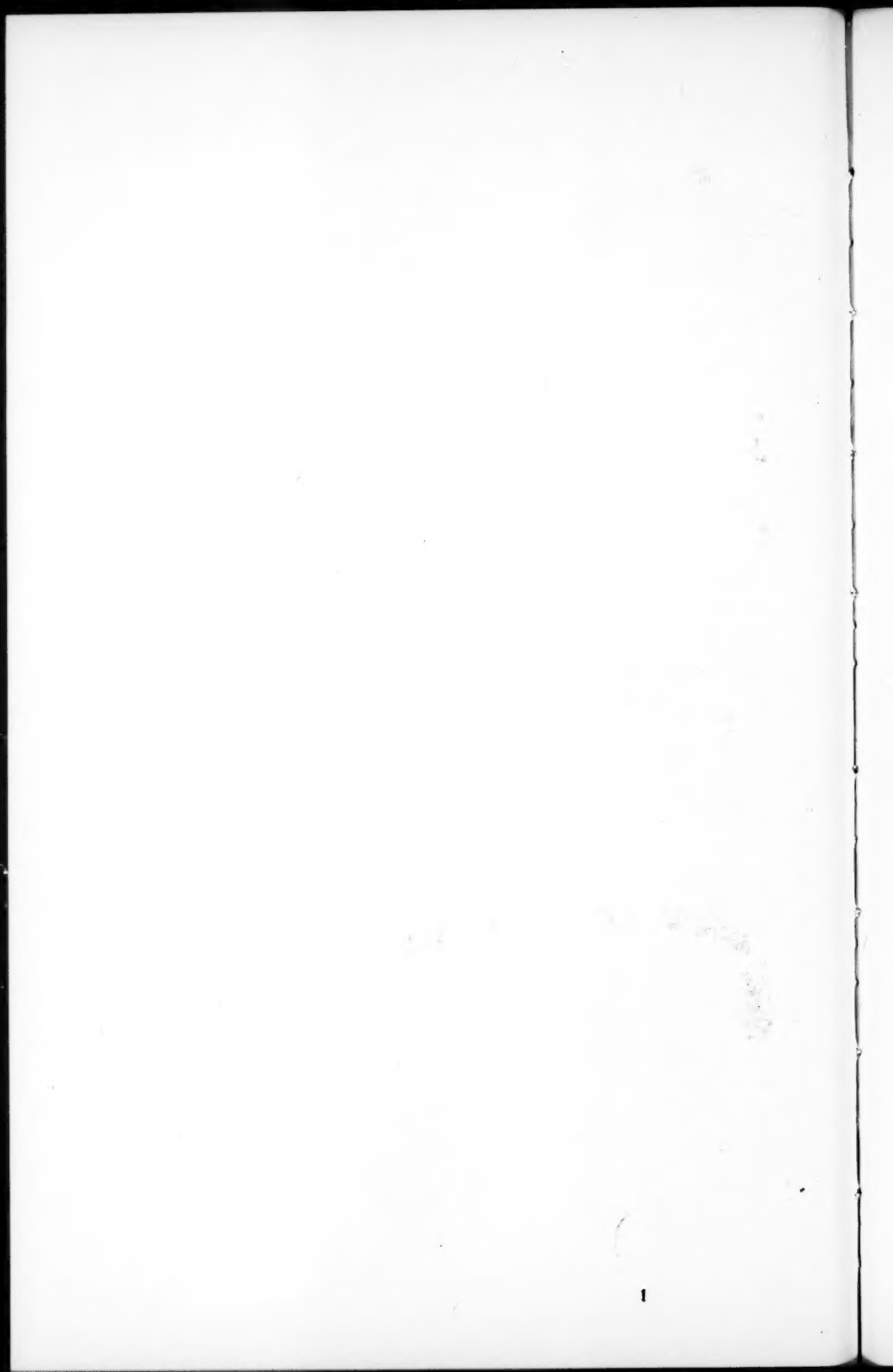
To Hugh Hartshorne for the arrangement of the publications of Dr. Coe, for selecting articles by Dr. Coe and for the securing of pictures we are deeply indebted.

—The Editorial Committee





SELF PHOTO.  
GEORGE ALBERT COE  
1862 - 1951



# In Memoriam

## GEORGE ALBERT COE

### 1862 - 1951

*In the following twenty articles George Albert Coe is seen through the eyes of his friends. The first seven articles (I-VII) appraise his contributions to different areas of thought. The next three (VIII-X) present his active teaching years at the three institutions of learning where he spent almost forty years. The last ten articles (XI-XX) consider personal items about him and portray many phases of his varied life.*

*To George Albert Coe—teacher, colleague, friend, "champion of man," and "servant of God" these articles are dedicated.*

—The Editorial Committee

## I

### CONTRIBUTION TO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

#### I

THE WORK of George A. Coe in the psychology of religion falls within the tradition of the scientific approach to an understanding of the nature and origin of religion as a phase of man's interaction with his natural, social, cultural, and cosmic world. To Dr. Coe religious behavior is as amenable to the scientific procedures of observation, analysis, appraisal, and redirection as any other form of human behavior, without recourse to a priori assumptions regarding the supernatural or authoritative revelation. In his investigation into the nature and origin of religion he employed the empirical method with undeviating consistency and a remarkable degree of objectivity.

The scientific approach to the understanding of religion had its beginning with the publication of David Hume's *Natural History of Religion* in 1757. The scientific study of religion has passed through several phases, to the latest of which Dr. Coe has made a most significant contribution. The anthropologists were drawn to a study of religion in the latter half of the nineteenth century through their investigations into the origin of man and the development of his culture in which they discovered that religion was a fundamental aspect of primitive man's reaction to

his natural and social environment. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the history of religion brought to light the fact that the historic religions are processes developing within the cultural patterns of different peoples and changing with their evolving cultures. The sociological study of religion had its beginning with Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer and as a form of collective behavior received status as a phase of sociological inquiry in the second quarter of the present century. The latest development of the scientific study of religion, to which Dr. Coe belongs, had its rise at the turn of the century with the publication of William James' *Will to Believe* in 1897, Edwin D. Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion* in 1899, and Dr. Coe's *Spiritual Life* in 1900.

#### II

Within the scientific study of religion the psychology of religion has passed through several phases in its development. Quite understandably it began with the study of the obtrusive phenomenon of conversion by Starbuck and Coe in 1899 and 1900. It was extended to a wider range of religious experience in William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1902 following his *Will to Believe* in 1897 in which he had located

religion in the conative aspects of experience, in keeping with his pragmatic philosophy.

Within this wider range of inquiry, the first task was to differentiate religious experience from other forms of man's experience and to identify its essential psychological character. In this undertaking the psychology of religion found a foothold in Harald Höffding's concept of religion as the conservation of values in his *Philosophy of Religion*, 1906. One group of thinkers identified religion with intellectual processes, as in Hegel's idea that religion was concerned with a knowledge of eternal truth, in Tylor's conception of religion as belief in spiritual beings, and in Romanes' view that religion is "a department of thought having for its object a self-conscious and intelligent Being." Another group of thinkers identified religion with an emotional state, as in Auguste Sabatier's "feeling of dependence which every man experiences with respect to universal being," in Schleiermacher's "neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling," and C. P. Tiele's "pure and reverential disposition or frame of mind which we call piety." In this development, Dr. Coe takes his position with a group of thinkers who locate the religious attitude in the conative, or end-seeking, activity of dynamic human persons in their outreaching attempts to satisfy human needs. In finding the core of religion in ethical will, Dr. Coe shares the general point of view of such thinkers as J. H. Leuba who sees religion as "a part of the struggle for life"; of Shailer Mathews who views religion as "a sense of dependence, an attempt to get help (from environing realities) through the establishment of personal relations, and the utilization of social experience, culture, organization, and customs in such attempts"; of J. B. Pratt to whom religion is "a serious and social attitude toward the Determiner of Destiny"; of H. N. Wieman who regards the "human drive toward more abundant living (as) the root of religion in human nature"; and E. S. Ames to whom religion is the "intensification of social values." This third group definitely locates religion in the area of valuational ex-

perience. Moreover, by identifying religion as conative, end-seeking activity the intellectual aspects of religion as its interpreting and directive factor and emotion as its affective concomitant are integrated into an undifferentiated involvement of the whole person and social group in a search for supremely worthwhile ends.

The next problem was to differentiate religion as a valuational experience from other forms of valuational experience. It is here that Dr. Coe made his greatest contribution to the psychology of religion. In 1910 E. S. Ames and Irving King, working mostly with anthropological data, identified religion with the quest for social values. To Ames "religion, with its changing forms, may thus be seen in its natural concrete character as a phase of specialized human experience . . . in which the life of society is felt to center." To King "religious acts and ideas are themselves an organic part of the activities of the social body." King analyzed the psychological situation in which values arise as involving the gap that arises between an ongoing activity and the end toward which it is moving through delay, suspense, and effort and in which the end is sharply raised into consciousness and invested with value. In 1912 Durkheim carried the identification of religious with social values to its utmost limit by his thesis that when religion and social organization are traced to their origin they merge in totemism, in which "the god of the clan, the totemic principle, can therefore be nothing else than the clan itself, personified and represented to the imagination under the visible form of the animal or vegetable that serves as the totem."

Dr. Coe differed from Ames, King, and Durkheim in that he identified religion, not with social values, or with any other particular value, such as the noetic, aesthetic, moral, or economic, but the *revaluation, integration, and idealization of all specialized values into a total meaning and worth of life*. In this penetrating insight into the nature and function of religion Dr. Coe carried the trend toward a functional concept of religion to its highest level in the psychology of religion — a level beyond which it has not subsequently

advanced. It is significant that, with the exception of some tentative ventures in this field by psychoanalysts who to this writer seem not to have consolidated a significant new development, creative advance in the psychology of religion has for some four decades remained substantially where it was when Dr. Coe wrote his *Psychology of Religion*.

### III

In the light of his place in the development of the psychology of religion, therefore, it will be well to examine what was involved in Dr. Coe's conception of religion as the revaluation of values.

The revaluation of values, in Dr. Coe's mind, is predicated upon the evolution of desire in a process involving both structure and function. Evolution is a process in which change and continuity are reciprocal and inseparable. In this dynamic process of change and growth, desire manifests five characteristics: (1) desire is not extinguished when its immediate satisfaction is attained; (2) human desire undergoes a process of organization toward the unity of the individual whereby he objectifies his desires, compares them, and arranges them into a scale more or less refined; (3) human desires come to include a desire to have desires whereby man regulates his desire to have this or that object, but also to become this or that kind of man; (4) human desires undergo a process of organization toward social as well as individual unity; (5) human desire, growing by what it feeds upon, refining itself, judging itself, organizing itself, becomes also desire for the conservation of the human desire-and-satisfaction type of experience.

With these characteristics, within the process of evolving desires revaluation assumes two fundamental forms. The first is the reconciliation of emergent desires with old desires. The development of new desires creates a tension and resistance within the system of desires. This leads to an examination and criticism of the old desires in the light of changed wants and newly conceived ends. In this way the value system of the

individual or the social group is constantly undergoing reconstruction through repeated cycles of tension and reconciliation.

The second form is the reconciliation and integration of different particular present desires into an organic consistent functioning whole. Thus there are noetic values that have their rootage in the intellectual interests and activities of the person or the group, as represented by science and philosophy. There are also economic values that grow out of the processes of production, consumption, and exchange. Similarly there are social values, aesthetic values, moral values. Each of these types of value tends to become organized into a self-contained system of value detached from other equally self-contained systems of value. Dr. Coe does not identify religion with any specialized or particular set of values, but with "desire within desire," "a revaluation of values that both makes us individuals and organizes us into society." "Any reaction," he says, "may be considered religious to the extent that it seeks 'life' in the sense of completion, unification, and conservation of values—any values whatever. Religion does not introduce any new value; it is an operation upon or within all our appreciations. If we were to speak of religious value at all, we should think of it as the value of values, that is, the value of life organizing and completing itself, or seeking a destiny, as against the discrete values of impulsive or unreflective existence." Thus with Dr. Coe, religion is the revaluation of values, involving the idealization, the completion, the unification, and the conservation of all the values of life whatsoever. It arises at the point at which all values are fused into a total meaning and worth of life.

### IV

Immensely important results have accrued for those concerned both with an understanding of religion and its operation in personal and social living from Dr. Coe's insight into its psychological origin and nature. His clear grasp of the functional relation of religion to personal and social experience has made it possible to distinguish between the function of religion—the integration and motivation of life in and through its

supreme and comprehending value system—and the structures through which this universal function finds its changing historic expression—theological concepts, ritualistic forms, and ecclesiastical organization. The integrating and idealizing function abides as a constant of religious experience while its theology, cultus, and ecclesiastical structures change with the changing culture of historic periods. This makes it possible to understand why religion differs from one culture group to another in accordance with the changing relevancies of historical experience. It also makes it possible to understand why the theological concepts, the cultic practices, and the ecclesiastical forms of a given social group change as the practical interests and activities of their culture change in the course of their historical evolution. This is a unitive idea which emphasizes the universal nature of man's religious interaction with his objective world and makes it possible to go beyond tolerance to mutual understanding and appreciation.

It also provides a rational ground for the conscious and intentional attempts to organize religious experience through the practical operations of preaching, pastoral care, missions, religious education, and social reconstruction. Religious values, if they are to be convincingly real and effective in their influence upon personal and social living, must be functionally related to experience. They must have their genesis in experience and operate in experience as factors of evaluation and control, rather than be imposed upon experience from some assumed "supernatural" and authoritative source. They are of the "stuff" of life itself, an integral quality of its warp and woof.

It makes it possible to close the gap that has historically arisen from the dichotomy between the "natural" and the "supernatural," between the "religious" and the "secular," between the "temporal" and the "eternal." It makes it possible to see God, not as a remote Being whose creative activity is limited to some primordial moment of the past and who invades the orderly processes of history through some cataclysmic act, but as continually present in the processes of history and as creatively at work in man's present experience as in any epochal period of the recoverable past. By such an insight God becomes, in the language of Jesus, not the God of the dead, but of the living. Such a concept of religion has particular relevance to the cultural crisis through which our generation is passing when again at one of the great turning points of history we are forced to re-examine our traditional values and to redefine the ends we seek and the dynamic values that lie at the heart of the human adventure.

From such an objective review of his place in the development of psychological thought regarding the nature and origin of religion and the practical implications that issue from it, it is difficult to overstate the importance of the thinking of George Albert Coe. In his sensitive insight into the social implications of religion he stands in the tradition of the eighth century prophets. In his identification of religion with life he stands in the tradition of Jesus as the greatest of the prophets. In his keen insight into functional relation of religion to life in its creative emergence he is in himself a high illustration of the prophet as distinguished from the priest, a distinction he was careful to make in his writings.

WILLIAM CLAYTON BOWER  
*Emeritus Professor, University  
of Chicago*



## II

# CONTRIBUTIONS TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Did Coe make a significant contribution to religious education? Can any individual hope to make any important difference in the philosophy, methods, or practices of religious education? Coe believed that the growth process was the most outstanding characteristic of man and his world. He believed that man could increasingly come to an understanding of this growth process in the areas of moral and religious living, and that man had a responsibility to exercise a creative force in development of meanings, values, and progressive achievements. He did not shut his eyes to difficult facts but he believed from his observations and studies that mankind was learning, and that the developments in education were enabling man to gain insights, clarify objectives, and to make specific advances in moral and religious living. He spent his life in trying to understand this forward movement and to share in its varied activities.

It is extremely difficult to measure satisfactorily any individual's contribution to human progress, in any particular field. Progress is slow, and what even an exceptional leader says or does that is unique and effective in modifying human behavior is hard to define. It seems to be the role of a leader to pick up ideas that are growing in his environment, to give them dramatic settings, and to enlist some cooperative interest in making them function. As a psychologist Coe was deeply interested in how he and others get liberating ideas and ideals, and how they become motivating and directive factors in meeting the problems of the common life. He knew that it was impossible to transmit ideas and values directly from one person to another, or from one generation to another. He rejected the procedures which tried to achieve this impossibility. With a dogged perseverance Coe emphasized the fact that people learn by experience, that experience colors all inter-

pretations of life, that ideas and values change with changing experiences. But he also stressed another vital principle that intelligent people do not have to be helpless victims of chance experiences. The processes of learning involve critical evaluation of experience, creative experimentation, and continual revision of working principles and practices, Coe knew that if religious educators did not understand the psychology of learning they would be moving blindly toward goals that were only vaguely conceived. He felt that the church, organized religion, was not giving the leadership in moral and spiritual values needed in a modern age. He tried to help religious educators appreciate the irrationality of behavior that was controlled by rigid mores. Fifty years ago in his book *Education in Religion and Morals* he said, "What is wanted in our religious education is more openness toward modern knowledge, more boldness to take advantage of its help in the interpretation of life, and in respect to social and political conditions more of the fighting spirit." Coe's writings reflect a growth in psychological understanding, an appreciation of changing ideas and theories. He kept alert to findings in the physical and social sciences, as well as to developing thoughts in religion, philosophy, and education. He was not afraid to acknowledge changes in his own point of view. At eighty-two in his book *What is Religion Doing to Our Consciences?* he said in the preface, "I have re-examined my own position, with the result of becoming to a significant extent a dissenter from some of my own published writings."

## I

It might be fair then to judge that one of Coe's most important contributions to religious education was in the area of educational method. He rejected the Herbartian method of indoctrination because he respected growing personalities, and because

he felt religion had a vital growth quality. Coe did not regard religious education as a confrontation of either young or old with a set of dogmas. In one of his last articles, "My Search for What is Most Worthwhile" (*Religious Education*, March-April 1951) he says, "The most significant turning point in my life was from dogmatic method to scientific method. Devotion to truth ascertained by scientific method became a feature of my personal religion." With this conviction that honest inquiry was vital to religious insight and faith he sought to inspire children, youth, and adults with the spirit of inquiry. He accepted the problem-project method of teaching as a good working way of using the scientific method in religious education. By grading projects to the maturity level of learners, and by keeping problems in the situations that were meaningful and important for them, he felt that the best growth in moral and spiritual appreciations would come and find fruitful results in life. History was approached through the insights of living experiences. No voice from the past spoke authoritatively for him, and he taught children, as well as older persons, to ask questions as to why people of old believed and acted as they did. The scientific method was for him the way man had learned to penetrate below the surface of things, to refine the data of experience, and to organize it for use in dealing with the problems of a complex world. To substitute speculation and argument for empirical data and cooperative inquiry was for him to endanger all moral and religious teachings. He believed that faith should rest on experience, not on fine spun theologies. Instead of believing what their elders taught them about God, Jesus, the Bible, or any other religious concept, form, or institution, Coe would have children and youth examine the variant beliefs and practices, and in the light of growing knowledge come to their own conclusions and convictions. To achieve this he felt that discussion of abstract ideas or principles was generally futile, while inquiry into living problems under teachers who understood and respected growing capacities and needs was most fruitful. In this educa-

tional procedure Coe stressed certain basic principles such as democratic social interaction, creative experience, purposeful activity, critical evaluation, openness of mind, and growing comprehension and expression. In his classroom teaching, in the laboratory school of religion, in his curricular experiment with Dr. Kent, and in his various books and articles Coe tried to make plain what this method of teacher-learner relationship might mean for personality development, especially in the matter of moral and spiritual qualities. His ideal for a curriculum in religious education was "a graded series of experiments in social living" where the pupils were helped to think through the consequences of different alternatives, and to find the satisfaction of actually trying out for themselves how things worked.

## II

Another principle which permeated all of Dr. Coe's teachings was respect for personality. He summed up his theory of Christian education in the last page of his book *What is Christian Education?* in these words, "It is the systematic, critical examination and reconstruction of relations between persons, guided by Jesus' assumption that persons are of infinite worth, and by the hypothesis of the existence of God, the Great Valuer of Persons." In the same book he said (p. 181) "Is not the personality-principle final for us anyhow, whether Jesus grasped it or not? We hold to it because of its inherent validity, just as he did; it is not secondary to anything or anybody." His faith in God rested on his appreciation of the potentialities of persons, and of persons in the large, not idealized forms. In his *Motives of Men* he said "Faith in God declines with inability to produce the Christ-like in the common man engaged in the common occupations of the day." And in *What is Christian Education?* he concluded, "If there be God, the Great Valuer of Persons, he will be most manifest where we take risks on behalf of persons." His consuming passion was to awaken in young and old a sense of their possible worth as persons, and to stimulate them to rich self-activity in a democratic society of persons. In his ear-

lier writings he accepted the then current theory that personality was an unfolding of instinctive tendencies, and he assumed that each child was born with instincts that blossomed into religious nature. Later he came to recognize the conditioning effect of environment, and still later he regarded personality as the resultant interaction of growing humans with changing psychophysical forces. He came to appreciate the divine plan of human development as one of slow discriminating growth of meanings and values, and he saw that the individual needed the respect and cooperation of his peers to achieve his best. The cruciality of the social setting for personality fulfilment made him much more concerned with the kind of parents, teachers, and associates which an individual had than with the abstract teachings which might be given him with emotional exhortations. He stressed the meaning of Christian as respect for persons, in all relationships, rather than idealization of a person. He sought both the full development of the individual and the democratic spirit in society. Hence the objective which he set in his *Social Theory of Religious Education*, "Growth of the young toward and into mature and efficient devotion to the democracy of God, and happy self-realisation therein."

### III

It will be recognized that this review of Coe's contributions implies that underlying all is his revolutionary concept of religion. He believed that most religious teaching dealt with traditions and abstract ideas that were foreign to the interests of most people. He saw churches divided and organized religion impotent in the face of overwhelming social issues. In his book *The Spiritual Life* (1900) he said "not seldom, through ignorance of the history of philosophical and theological thought religious instruction becomes little less than farcical; but fully as often it goes astray from ignorance of the workings of the human mind." Coe was deeply religious himself, and he felt the hunger of others for the kind of faith that could support man in his upward climb. He found this faith in the nature of the world

and of the life processes which science was making more and more real and dependable. In the book just mentioned he said, "It may be worth while to remind ourselves now and then that facts are facts, and that no amount of theorizing about how they must be can prevent or refute observation of how they actually are." He reacted strongly against the common custom of indoctrinating children and young people with ideas of what God must be. In this last article "My Search for What is Most Worthwhile" he said "One might well ask whether we could reverence a God who was averse to having us sturdily inquire whether he exists." Some have been disturbed by Coe's attitude in making theology secondary, rather than primary, in religious education, but Coe understood how growing persons get ideas and how these ideas change with widening experience. He was never concerned with trying to maintain any particular system of theological thought, for he knew religion as a growing and ever changing body of ideas, values, and methods of expression. This dynamic progressive point of view depended upon a constant evaluation, and re-evaluation of enlarging experiences and scientifically organized knowledge. It was moreover related intimately to what he called the personality-principle. Religion finds its center and constant motivation in a growing appreciation of potentialities in persons. Its most vital institutions and permeating spirit are related to efforts to improve personal-social relations. Coe felt a kinship to many who rejected conventional forms and expressions of religion, but who were devoted to the search for truth and to causes affecting human welfare. It was not strange that when he retired from Union Theological Seminary at sixty years of age that he moved across the street to Teachers' College and at sixty-five felt that in these five years "he was able to do the best teaching of his career." Whether he wrote in a religious or an educational journal Coe kept to his central interests for he knew no boundaries between "sacred" and "secular." He never felt the necessity for reading into scripture what he wanted to make meaningful as re-

ligious, for Coe had the same free spirit as Jesus when he wrote in *Education in Religion and Morals* (1904), "Religious experience is not something different from living a good life, but it is just living it more abundantly." A few years ago he wrote the writer as follows: "Your quest for material of religious education in the common life always has impressed me as being sound at the core. The more I think about the idea, the more I am inclined to regard the common life as *the* source of this material. The difficulty I have felt with respect to this approach is the difficulty of inducing the churches to enter into it wholeheartedly. This difficulty is so great that perhaps real religious education will have to be expelled from the synagogue before it can freely perform its functions. Already it is being shoved towards the door. How paradoxical it would be if for a time the main job of religious education should turn out to be that of calling the churches to repentance. Certainly it would be exciting to develop in the young, and in the unchurched, capacity to analyse and judge what the churches say and do." In another letter he wrote "For me, now many years, the spiritual life is identical with life as a person, and fulfilment of the demands of personality is religious. This changes the whole approach to religion and religious education from the categories of substance to the categories of value. My *Psychology of Religion* from beginning to end is concerned with values. The educational approach to religion requires reconstruction of religion, not the mere application of it." Coe believed that Christian principles and practices could and ought to change without ceasing to be Christian. He was not satisfied to appease orthodoxy by merely using old terms with new meanings. In his *Motives of Men* (p. 257) he said "We are living in a universe in which no mental reservations are needed by anyone." Coe was not afraid to be different and to state his views with conviction. In his "remarks" at the dinner celebrating his sixty-fifth birthday, he said, "It seems to me, as I survey my experience, that I have been most nearly right when I have leaned most toward

the radical side of any question, and most nearly wrong when I have leaned toward the conservative side."

#### IV

If Coe was radical in religion he was probably more so in his social and ethical emphases. He was no champion of any special movement or cause but he shared in many social activities directed toward the transformation of standards and practices. It made him uncomfortable religiously to know that even in the United States "a third of our people are ill fed, ill clothed, and ill housed." He tried repeatedly to give religious education "economic orientation." Even at eighty-one he could not refrain from writing *What is Religion Doing to Our Consciences?* — "not a treatise, but only a sort of tract for the times." He recognized that it was not easy in a modern world because of the complexity of operations in which people are involved to keep a Christian moral sensitivity. While he acknowledged an inescapable ambiguity in many personal-social issues he felt religion must face them rather than detour around them. All through his theories and programs for religious education Coe stresses the need for practice in analyzing, in searching for facts, and in planning some remedial measures. His basic working principle was that ethical love, which should govern men in all relationships, is rooted in respect for persons as such. But he knew as well as anyone that "Ethical love itself is not a formula for what is to be done, but a motive for finding out what needs to be done, and *then* doing it." Coe taught his students, and children of the Union School of Religion, to take the role of others, to respect other people's point of view, and to try to understand what good and evil mean to those who have different backgrounds and different needs. In this 1943 book Coe says, "the Christian personality principle implies that all persons whatsoever are original sources of insight into distinctions between goods and evils; that the supreme test of Christian conscience today concerns its readiness to accept this implication and the consequences of it; that this is difficult because, as a rule, we Chris-

tians spend our lives upon one side of a great gap, on the other side of which there is a vast experience of good and evil in which we never participate;—and that mutual enlightenment of conscience would be enhanced if religious exercises included listening to analyses of good and evil by persons whose experiences of them are unlike our own." (p. 64) In his *Religion of the Mature Life* (1902) Coe had a chapter on the moral foundations of spirituality, in which he said, "A religion that did not concern itself with right and wrong would be no religion at all,"—"orthodoxy cannot take the place of righteousness." In 1917 in his *Social Theory of Religious Education* he emphasized the need for a curriculum of graded social experiences in which progressive moral discrimination and motivation would be developed. He was little interested in abstract virtues, and knew mere exhortations to reach ideals were inadequate, but he did have faith in the possible brotherly response of both young and old when real life situations were met. In the carefully developed study of 1929, *What is Christian Education?* Coe stressed the need in religious education for both critical and creative approaches to the confusing and overwhelming problems of moral and religious living. Putting his personality-principle at the center of his whole treatise he sought to awaken not only a conception of better interpersonal relations, but a desire for higher values and achievements by persons than yet realised. Again in his book of 1932, *Educating for Citizenship* he endeavoured to make explicit how sacred and secular must become one in a Christian's fulfilment of good citizenship. He wanted young people to face the alternatives of individual and corporate conduct, and to form convictions and purposes for Christian democratic action, whether they took the role of sovereign or citizen. In this book as in other writings Dr. Coe was much concerned over the problems of war and militarism, labor relations, racial conflicts, civil liberties, economic justice, good government, general education, and the wide variety of social questions which perplex and yet endlessly challenge Christian intelligence

and courage. He had no ready answers to give, and would not pretend that prayer for supernatural aid would bring desired solutions. He looked to see what others were doing about these problems, and he taught his students to do the same. He always found that spiritual forces were at work, that men and women were grappling with the most difficult tasks and making progress, and that ethical love—the growing respect of person for person—was the hope of mankind. The baffling ambiguities of good and evil challenging moral idealism did not destroy Coe's faith for he had a growing experience of the power of ethical love, and he felt this was the inherent and inexhaustible resource for mankind in his upward climb. This conviction rests in his understanding of the way in which human nature emerges. It is a product of interpersonal forces, and the solution of moral problems is rooted in social psychology rather than in theology. Hence the method of religious education is again that of inquiry, scientific study, for by beginning in childhood, continuing through adolescence, and following the adult to maturity, man may learn the laws of good living, and gradually put them into practice in the growingly complex relations of individuals and groups of persons. For Coe religion is still in the making. Man has still much to learn of good and evil, of God, and of himself and his potentialities.

# V

Again in closing it is pertinent to ask—What did Coe contribute to religious education? He contributed nearly forty years to teaching philosophy, education, psychology, and religious education. He wrote more than a dozen books, and hundreds of articles. He led many conferences, and gave innumerable addresses. He put his thoughts into words, let them be criticized, and spoke and wrote again. He sharpened vague fuzzy concepts, and learned from others and from experiences which he shared with others. Coe lived a richly varied life, and he talked things over with other people, taking time to get others' points of view. He could learn from children, youth, or adults, and they could understand him. He contributed



to others according to their readiness to learn from him. It is a peculiar characteristic of human interactions that each individual reads into another's words, or acts, meanings that are dependent upon his own experiences. To the degree that two people have common experiences, needs, and satisfactions or dissatisfactions, they will have common understandings and incentives. But as people vary in organic equipment, physical and social environments, conditioning situations, and patterns of response, so do their interactions vary in personality increments. This writer has tried to tell what Coe has meant to him, as he knew him, studied with him, read and re-read his books and articles, and talked and corresponded with him. This writer tells what interests him, what he feels has helped him to shape his ideas and methods in religious education. Perhaps he ascribes to Coe what he has learned from others, or what he has put together from cumulative experiences. At least he knows that Coe was a stimulating influence on his life, that he was inspired by a consciousness that an older

colleague was fearless in his search for truth, that though he had changed his thinking as he grew older he never ceased to have the persistent Christian faith in the possible advancement of the common man. It was good to share life with a deeply religious man who had no theology to defend or propagate, but who had a ceaseless interest in the realities related to theology. It was a grand tribute to this great soul, that in the colony where he died, though he asked that there should not be a memorial service, yet his friends did get together "to help each other recall what his life among them had meant to them." And so we as members of the Religious Education Association do the same. He was an old friend to many of us, and we want to exchange thoughts with one another while his thoughts are still fresh in our minds. It is the spirit of Christian fellowship which we all need to become our best and to make our contributions to the on-going transforming forces of religious education.

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### III

## CONTRIBUTION TO THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

A number of years ago one of the great pioneers in the religious education movement said to me: "Dr. Coe chose to work in the Religious Education Association; I chose to work in the International Council." Each of these two men has made his unique contribution to the cause and each has put his mark upon the agency which his personality was best equipped to serve. It is for this reason that the contributions of George Albert Coe to the Religious Education Association are much the same contributions which he has made to the wider movement of which it is the chief cornerstone. Moreover, many of the achievements of the Asso-

ciation, though made thus indirectly, are to be credited to this man whose name through the last half century has been inseparable from it.

As a college and seminary student I had known well the name of George Albert Coe. My first personal contact with him came when, as a student at Garrett Biblical Institute in 1915, I attended the Chicago convention of the R.E.A. The personal interest which he and his fellow members took in me and in the other "young fry" made a great impression. From then on the organization and the man were one in my mind and, as subsequent experiences proved, one in their



relations to the movement in which I have been privileged to share.

#### *Founding Father and Godfather*

In a historical report to the Association twenty years after its founding its long time General Secretary Henry F. Cope mentions nine of the pioneers, who were present at the organizing meeting. Aside from President William Rainey Harper, in the first years of the Association, none of these "founding fathers" gave a more extended and intensive service to it than did Dr. Coe. He was rightly proud of being a charter member and through the years often made reference to the beginnings of the Association and its significance for the cause to which so many of us are devoted.

To him, however, being one of the founding fathers was not merely a "glory that once was." He came to be a veritable godfather of the organization a continuing sponsor for its pioneer purposes, the beloved teacher of its new and younger members and the chief counsellor of the older ones. His spirit and many of his points of view have been incorporated into its half century of life and service. It is eminently true of the Religious Education Association that "an institution is the lengthened shadow of one man." The members of the Association, gratefully aware of this indebtedness, publicly recognized it in 1938 by electing him their honorary president, and continued that expression of their feeling for him until his death. An editorial by Dr. Bower in *Religious Education* for July-September, 1938 stated: "His colleagues hold Dr. Coe in the highest esteem and the warmest affection. His spirit has left its indelible impress upon the movement to which he has devoted his life, and has been a source of unending inspiration to those who worked by his side. In seeking to honor Dr. Coe by making him Honorary President the Association has honored itself."

#### *Spirit of His Spirit*

This godfatherly relationship to the R.E.A. was by no means one of the usual "behind the scenes" dominance. The gifts he gave to his godchild were of a different sort. One of these was his daring trust in the poten-

tialities of a youthful leadership. The central thesis of his book, *What Ails Our Youth?*, is his belief that "The variability of youth is a normal and proper organ for the self-revelation of God" and the dedication of that book is unusual to say the least: "An old teacher gratefully dedicates this book to those of his students who questioned his teachings." I cannot refrain from a personal illustration. My coming all the way from Arkansas to attend the Rochester Convention in 1921 seemed to make a great impression upon him, for he spoke of it several times as he introduced me to others of the learned company. It evidently played a part in my being asked the next fall to undertake the survey of weekday religious education sponsored by the Association. Dr. Coe sympathized with the struggles of his own and other student youngsters and delighted in their achievements. His mood of trustfulness was reflected also by other "old timers" of the Association. We may well "take a lesson" from it as we plan for the R.E.A. of tomorrow.

His love of youth and his friendships with them and with his older associates, did not sway him when it came to making decisions as to the best policy to be followed. I recall several instances in which I was personally concerned, one of which will serve as an example. I had been requested by the editor of *Religious Education* to prepare for publication in it an elaborate outline of a training course which would represent a new type of service to the membership. After it had been worked upon at great length and with unusual detail, it was submitted to the editorial board, of which Dr. Coe was then a member. He opposed the use of *Religious Education* for such a purpose as a matter of policy and wrote me an assuaging letter of explanation! Freedom from expediency, favoritism and ecclesiastical politics has been a strong factor in the success of the organization, thanks in large part to him.

No friend or acquaintance of either Dr. Coe or the Religious Education Association could fail to overlook his vigorous championing of the social emphasis in religion. This expressed itself both in his educational methodology and in his personal alliance with

liberal movements. The dedication of his *A Social Theory of Religious Education* to "Harry F. Ward Who Sees and Makes Others See" reveals his early interest in the whole gospel. Increasingly, as his years of influence in the Association multiplied, he weighted his concerns in its activities with challenges to apply love to the solution of some social problem—war and peace, race relations, economic injustice, democracy in education, and others. Many of Dr. Coe's contemporaries in the field shied away from these knotty problems as outside their immediate task of religious educational theory and method. Those who did see the inescapable relationship of these tools to the kind of society in which they are utilized, owed their enlarging vision to a large degree to his "hammering away" at the problems in his classes, in the annual meetings of the Association and through personal contacts with his younger associates. While the Association has no social platform, it has nevertheless been a "two-edged sword" for social righteousness.

Strange though it may appear to some, I believe that Dr. Coe possessed and shared with many members of the Religious Education Association an unusual type of personal religion. He was not one to wear his heart upon his sleeve. Nor did he evince any appreciable interest in the hackneyed phrases of the ultra-conservatives in religion, except as he could see beneath these outward expressions the manifestations of genuine religious concern. One afternoon, when he and Dr. Cope and I were planning an annual convention program, he expressed a desire for a paper on mysticism, a suitable writer for which did not come to mind easily. "Dr. Coe," I suggested, "Why don't *you* write it?" "Do you think I'm a mystic?" he countered. My reply, "You're more of a mystic than you think you are," had the quick seconding of Dr. Cope and Coe accepted the assignment. Those of us, who were close to him in the R.E.A., have discovered that the breadth of Coe's social gospel was complemented by the quiet depth of his personal devotion.

Not only was Dr. Coe a seer in his religious and educational philosophy. He was fore-

sighted and timely with reference to the practical issues of the religious education movement. Always eager for the R.E.A. to come to grips with emerging trends, he persuaded the program committee for the 1922 convention to lay aside a previously adopted theme to take a searching look at the rapidly developing movement for weekday religious education. As a result the Association conducted a comprehensive survey of its current status and character and made the facts revealed the basis of three days intensive discussion. The findings of the convention saw in the weekday church school "hope of realizing for the modern world a religious training more nearly adequate to meet present conditions," and that it was "entitled to make its vital contribution to the education of the child." It warned, however, that this teaching of religion should not be done "by the public school nor in official connection with the public school." Had this warning been more scrupulously heeded, there would have been no need for the ruling of the Supreme Court in the Champaign case, embodying the same principle that Dr. Coe and others of us in those pioneer days of the movement were convinced was essential to its success and permanence.

#### *Fellowship, Forum and School*

One of the most outstanding characteristics of the Religious Education Association is its spirit of fellowship. Dr. Coe himself testified to this when he wrote in the *Religious Education* in 1944: "I think of the Association, first of all, as a religious fellowship . . . Faces that no longer are visible and voices that no longer are audible are nevertheless present with me . . . young faces of living men and women . . . I have beheld profound conviction and daring commitment to a great and sacrificial task." The fellowship spirit of George A. Coe was indeed catching in the Association. It is a fellowship of learners and inquirers as well as of teachers and expounders. It knows no boundaries of race or creed—a pioneer in this respect as well as in other ways. Its membership is world wide. We might substitute for the word "church," in a quotation from Coe's *Social Theory of Religious Education*, the

words "The Religious Education Association," so that it sets forth the method by which the Association has won its way: "The Religious Education Association, considered as educator, is primarily a fellowship of older and younger persons." That it has survived many difficulties is due, more than to any other factor to this spirit of fellowship.

Dr. Coe, with his contemporaries in the early years and with his more youthful associates in the later years, made and kept the Association a free forum. The early formulated slogan of the R.E.A. was thus phrased: "To inspire the educational forces of our country with the educational ideal; and to keep before the public mind the ideal of religious education and the sense of its need and value." There has been no thought that the Association should be a program building or a promotional agency. It was, to quote from Cope's report, "an association for protest; it was the social voice of criticism, an organized confession of shortcomings, a group call to repentance. But it was more; it was criticism at work, associated to study, to discover adequate method and to effect improvement." Well do I recall the time in the Association's history when Dr. Coe himself led a revolt to abolish the "Council" (an inner group of the more "high brow" members of the Association) because it was undemocratic! This same uncompromising freedom, which he insisted should characterize the Association, he again revealed in a testimony, written in May 1951, about Pilgrim Place, his home for the last twenty years: "This community actually realizes a life toward which the New England Pilgrims moved, namely, the union of strong convictions with equally unshakable liberty, plus fellowship

made firm by this treatment of differences. Diverse ecclesiastical attachments, diverse theologies, and diverse religious habits are here; but I have yet to know of an instance in which they have interfered with good fellowship, or disturbed anybody's equanimity . . . The individual says what he thinks without being penalized for doing so. This is the way of democracy. I like it!" So it has been in the R.E.A.

Thus, in large part because of the spirit and activities of George Albert Coe, the Religious Education Association has been the "heart" of the religious education movement. It has been the unnamed, central "school" of religious education. It may be said that in this unique school he taught as widely as he did at Northwestern, at Union and at Teachers College. To it he drew many other pupils who were "not of these folds" but were representatives of many religious groups and varied schools for training leaders in religious education. May the spirit of its master teacher continue to abide in its membership as they learn, and teach, and learn again, for generations to come.

As we know, Mrs. Coe died many years ago. They had no children. He left no close relatives. His love and affection for the Religious Education Association and its fellowship may be illustrated by a quotation from his *Social Theory of Religious Education* explaining the universality of the parental "instinct": "When parents reach the weakness of old age, then the children, in their turn, assume the parental attitude toward those who bore them. A gentleman who was showing exquisite tenderness toward an aged parent remarked: 'I have had no children of my own, you know.'"

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## IV

### SOCIAL THOUGHT AND ACTION

My first distinct recollection of Dr. Coe's social thinking goes back very vividly to at least thirty-seven years ago. He had distributed a number of themes which his students might well investigate. I plunged into "*What Does Edward Scribner Ames Mean by Social Consciousness?*" Ames had recently produced a formidable book on that subject.

After reading, rereading, listing and re-listing what Ames wrote I found it impossible to understand exactly what he meant by social consciousness. It did not make sense to me. At last I said to myself, "I guess Ames is out of my world; I don't get him." At the risk of failing the course I got up enough nerve to report to Coe. I said to him, "I've tried diligently, but in vain, to find what Ames means by social consciousness." To my surprise Coe said, "Neither can I; I'm not sure Ames himself knows. Your discovery was all right." That was the first and only time I passed in the negative.

However, this seemingly futile exploration did something positive to me; it awakened in me a lasting earnestness about social ethics and the Christian religion. I determined then and there to get at the root of Coe's social thinking and action.

Dr. Coe's social ethics and religion revolved around three pivot points, (1) human personality, (2) insistence on human freedoms, (3) human justice. As I read his last essay<sup>1</sup> before it was published I found that he had gone still deeper into those fields, all of which revolved around personality. In that essay Coe wrote, "My dominant ethical interest has concerned the nature, functions and the setting within the natural order of the human personality."

It was not difficult to understand what Coe meant when he talked about human justice. Here he was also as fearless as he was clear, whether the hammer fell on human relations, industry, politics or organized reli-

gion, he let it fall. But when it came to personality Coe frequently left his disciples in the dark. His skillful use of the techniques of scientific method had failed him here. It was difficult and sometimes quite impossible for him to transmit what he was talking about and particularly how he felt. Doubtless this was due largely to the nature of the subject and man's inability to transmit the experiences of his private holy of holies. Since artists, musicians, poets, and creators of fine literature also find this impossible, the charge should not be laid too heavily against an educator at the religious level.

This issue became more complicated whenever Coe went prospecting in the psychology and philosophy of religion. Here he became involved not only in the mysteries of human personality, but also in man's over-all relations to the source of personality, known in the Christian religion as God the Father of mankind. What there was of the mystic in Coe as over against the prophet of righteousness and justice appears here. Fellowship with God meant something very precious to him, but he was quite helpless in transmitting what that was, so that a disciple could understand and feel the same way. It was very much as it must have been with Philip when Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"

I shall never forget discussing with Coe his *What Is Christian Education?*, while spending a few days with him in Glendora, California a few months after that book appeared. We had been happily racing along in our review, chapter by chapter when my question about the last chapter caused serious pause. I wanted to know whether Coe's concern about fellowship with God was not a resurgence of his early Christian training, at least prior to his devotion to the scientific method. I said, "The last chapter does not seem to flow naturally from the rest of the book. You could have omitted it."

<sup>1</sup>George A. Coe, "My Search for What is Most Worthwhile," *Religious Education*, Volume XLVI, Number 2, March-April, 1951. pp. 67-73.

Coe was serious; didn't answer for awhile and then said, "I can understand. The rest of the book can be taken without it. But it means something to me, I was constrained to add it. God means something personal to me. I can't explain it. I have nothing more to say on that score. You admit that I was not dogmatic. I'm grateful for that; let it rest there."

It was especially interesting to me to read the following, therefore, in Coe's last essay. There he comes at the matter from a slightly different angle when he speaks of turning away from dogmatic method to scientific method, saying:

Devotion to the truth ascertained by scientific method became a feature of my personal religion. As I review the "most worthwhile" of my present essay, I realize that in describing them I have already described my communion with God.<sup>2</sup>

I must confess that here my thoughts are as confused about fellowship with God as they were in the search for Ames' meaning of "social consciousness." As I faintly remember, Ames sought to identify religion with the social process. In certain ways Coe's position seems to make fellowship with God synonymous with the process of social ethics in personality development.

The process is clear, and scientific procedure in activating it is quite understandable. I've been caught up experimentally in that process until, like St. Paul, I've felt as if I were in the "seventh heaven" not knowing for sure whether I was in the body or out of it. But somehow I can differentiate that experience from communion with a friend. All my life it has seemed to me that communion with God should be of the same order as communion with a friend.

Perhaps the very process of seeking and partially attaining the "most worthwhile" became to Coe more meaningful than what fellowship usually connotes to both those who claim to have it with God and those who try but fail in arriving. I really don't know and must confess that I cannot understand why that which seems so real to one person is not

communicable to another through some common symbol.

But when Coe was analyzing human and ethical concepts in human relations he was always crystal clear. When he talked about fellowship with God I felt the glow of his radiance, and he seemed transfigured. But what he was talking about failed to flow from his mind to mine. In fact, I never was altogether sure that Coe was any too certain about it for himself. Witness what he said on the subject in that last essay:

Of course the meaning of God has changed for me, as it has changed for at least a large minority of those who are recognized as religious. How could the idea fail to become fluid when the experienced values that give meaning to life have grown fluid? These values are capable of going on from more to more, or backward from less to less. They are reflected backward towards origins and forward towards destinies in any idea of the world order that was entertained. The world order is a kind to bring forth these worthwhiles. It brings them forth from within, and partly by means of processes some of which are otherwise valueless, and some of which interfere with values. How deep within the universe this contrast between values and nonvalues goes is one of the ever-living questions. One recent philosopher of religion expressed the idea that God is the personality-producing force in the universe. Another philosopher of religion has taken the totality of our highest social values as the content of the idea of the divine. The growth of values is taken by another as the divine reality . . . at last the idea of a growing God has arrived.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, Coe considered all those ideas of "secondary importance." Said he, "the overwhelming important thing is the performance of the distinctive functions of personality."

It was this fact that predominated in Coe's social thought and action. Individuals for him became persons through social interrelations. He recognized that it takes at least two individuals to make persons out of both. Hence Coe's ethics, like his religion, was predominantly social. Righteousness, justice,

<sup>2</sup>*Op. cit.* p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>*Op. cit.* p. 73.



kindness, mercy were big words in Coe's ethical vocabulary, everyone of them a social concept. Human rights of every sort loomed large in his concern for both man and society. Society exists for man not man for society was Coe's conviction. He lived to set men free to become what potentially they were capable of becoming and helped to make them socially secure in the process of becoming.

Years ago I heard Coe challenged after making a speech in Cleveland. Someone said, "you're a radical, that's what you are!" He replied, "Yes, I'm a radical; I always try to get down to the roots."

It was digging at the roots of personality as it grows through human freedoms under social security that made Coe a constant exponent of "ethical love." Sentiment ran deep in him, but he abhorred sentimentality. He never was gushy, never "took pity on people." Ethical love was too exacting and demanding for that. It meant defending man's rights, every man's rights, regardless of race, nation, religion, class or what not. Coe could be a flaming torch of righteousness. He bore that torch high in the assemblies of the mighty as well as in his seminary and college classes. In dissecting falsehood from truth and unrighteousness from righteousness he cut to the bone.

He was an early advocate of organized labor. He tried hard to keep militarism from messing up education. He stood with the masses behind many an iron curtain and treated them as a shepherd who knows his sheep, and, to his own hurt, stood up for their rights. To the very end he saw the Russian people victims of internal domination and external misunderstanding.

In the essay referred to so frequently, Coe revealed what he meant by ethical love. He spoke of the gift of \$25,000 worth of streptomycin by the Friends Service Committee to the Russian people, saying:

These Quakers were following what they call the "inner light." Whatever the inner light may be or not be, it led them beyond the darkness that envelops the world today. They emerged into the light of unqualified goodness or ethical love, outward acting as

well as inwardly inspiring, free, unrestrained by public opinion, custom, and fear. These Americans conducted themselves as persons, and they assumed that Russians are persons . . .

This going the whole length with respect, active love, and drive towards community is what makes Jesus irresistible . . . His love, even for enemies, adds to the value of life what nothing seems able to take away . . . The realization of self in and through such love of others is a realization of the "blessed community" of which Royce and Jesus speak. It is to experience what is most of all worthwhile.<sup>4</sup>

These social convictions about people and their rights, in Coe's case, were also obvious in the same fundamental sense in his concern for children and youth. Here his religion, philosophy, ethics and pedagogy flowed into the main stream of his thinking and action, and made him the father of religious education in America. I remember Hugh Hartshorne saying years ago, and I agreed with him entirely, "Coe is religious education." That was true until his last moment. The religious education movement has still far to go to catch up with George A. Coe.

Perhaps it is correct to say that Coe's philosophy and psychology of religious education undergirded all his social thinking and action, whether the analysis is made from the angle of economics, sociology, political science, or theology. In religious education, Coe was all of one piece; his social concerns included all ages and all branches of the human family.

It was a great day in my own religious experience when I sensed Coe's faith in the ability of very young children to judge aright in social situations. How well I remember him saying in class one day, "Give children all the facts, give them to the children unvarnished and without preconceived bias, and let them judge for themselves. Nine times out of ten they will judge wisely and justly."

Again I remember way back how hard he worked to have policemen included among Jesus' modern disciples, in a church school course for intermediate children. "Let them

<sup>4</sup>*Op. cit.* p. 72.



know," he said, "that a policeman, like Jesus, is their friend and helper." That sunk deep into my soul because I had been brought up under the idea that a policeman is "out to catch you." The boys of my neighborhood were scared to death of a policeman. As I remember it, Coe's suggestion was turned down. There are lessons in some church school curriculum today on "Policemen as Friends of Children," but Coe was putting it there many years ago. He was far ahead in his social outlook.

When it came to youth, Coe wrestled with the social reasons why they sometimes go wrong and how they may be woven into the social fabric with golden threads. In *What Ails Our Youth?*, he dared to say that it is their parents who ail them. The home was institutionally primary in Coe's social thinking. Homes with family fireside chats, homes intelligently planned around social values, homes with a high order of worship, were Coe's basic center in which to apply ethical love. He stood four square with Pestalozzi who said:

My country, what you are, you are not by the grace of your kings, nor by the power of your great men, nor by the wisdom of your sages, but by the lofty strength and wisdom of the homes of your people throughout the land.

So was it in and out of the whole social order from children to grown people, from pre-school to adult education. I heard Coe speak once at Teachers College, Columbia University, on the subject, "Will Education Supersede Religious Education?" He said, "Yes, education will have superseded religious education when all education will have become religious." And he did not mean by that any state Constitution adoption of religion. He meant what President Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University had in mind when, in speaking of race relations, he said, "It is of little avail to use moral and religious injunctions about race even with good people so long as their basic secular beliefs about race justify in their own minds, the withholding of justice and the warm hand of fellowship."

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## V

### CONCEPTION OF MORAL AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

My personal acquaintance with Dr. Coe began some forty years ago. The period of my face-to-face intimacy was the decade from 1917 to his retirement from Teachers College in 1927. After that we had only correspondence, but this extended to the very end. What I shall say is based on Dr. Coe's writings, selected to bring out what I conceive to be his dominant outlook on the topic assigned me.

For Dr. Coe the terms moral, spiritual, and religious seem to cover very much the same ground, but in ascending emphasis. All three terms were concerned with "devotion to a cause or social ideal, that out-

runs the conventional social code, and perhaps required that it be revised." (3:185).<sup>1</sup> "I conceive the ethical in social terms, and therefore for me persons are the paramount reality" (2:xiv). It is perhaps permissible to say that *moral* is devotion to bringing the

<sup>1</sup>A parenthesis following a quotation gives the source of the quotation, the first figure naming the article or book, the second giving the page. In these the numeral one refers to "My Search for What Is Most Worthwhile," *Religious Education*, Volume XLVI, Number 2, pp. 67-73; two is the *Psychology of Religion* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1916); three is *A Social Theory of Religious Education* (New York, Scribners, 1917); four is *Law and Freedom in the School* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1924).

truest good to all concerned, that *spiritual* adds the demand that this "outrun" mere formal obedience to this ideal, with *religious* carrying this to the highest degree. Dr. Coe states explicitly that "religion is interested in all values, in the whole meaning of life" (2:75); and that "any reaction may then be considered religious to the extent that it seeks 'life' in the sense of completion, unification, and conservation of values." (2:70).

With these things before us we cannot be surprised to find Dr. Coe saying that "the religious enterprise is to me the most important undertaking in life." (2:xii). But we must understand this in terms of statements brought out in the article referred to: "The most significant turning point in my life, religiously considered, was this early turning away from dogmatic method to scientific method. Devotion to truth ascertained by scientific method became a feature of my personal religion." (1:73). "From my student days till now my dominant ethical interest has concerned the nature, the functions, and the setting within the natural order of the human personality." (1:69). And we may add, "What religion aims at is life at its greatest possible fullness." (2:69n).

To get Dr. Coe's vision in its fullness we must note the words "the setting" of "the human personality" "within the natural order." To many theologians of an earlier day these words would have raised serious questions. Dr. Coe in effect counters by raising questions about such theology. He is particularly concerned to uphold the right and duty of personality "to ask questions," as penetrating questions as one can conceive. Such "inquiry," he says explicitly, lies "at the core of personality." In fact, "a large part of the significance of personality has come to light in great questioners who, unrestrained and unafraid, look and see; follow evidence whithersoever it may lead; subordinate so-called personal interest to truth, and by cooperation of mind and mind create science, which is democracy of the intellect." (1:68). And he adds, "In the victory of scientific method over its opponents I perceive a great jump in the recognizable value of man." (1:68).

Through this same devotion to "inquiry" as "the core of personality" Dr. Coe pays his respects to philosophy and theology. "The significance of personality comes to light through philosophy also." (1:68). However, he continues, by philosophy he does not mean "anything that philosophy establishes by logical processes," but rather "confronting the universe with questions that one's own mind has completely wrought out." (1:68). And "theology asks much the same questions as philosophy, but after a fashion all its own. (1:68). This "fashion" he goes on to explain. Theology tends to regard itself "as a self-sustained unfolding of truth that has been grasped by one religion." (1:68) Inquiry conducted from such an assumption "plants an answer within what has the form of a question." (1:68). "This," he says, "I perceived when I was a young student of theology"; (1:68) "nevertheless, in theology, as in philosophy, the worth and dignity of human personality have stood out in the act of inquiry." (1:68). And he adds the illuminating insight: "For increasingly, theologians, sometimes at their cost, treat this or that dogma with freedom, and not a few theologians seem to forget entirely the authoritarianism that gave their occupation its name." (1:68).

Later Dr. Coe turns to "the religious prophet" for further light on what is most worth while and again finds the importance of inquiry to personality. "My main reason for naming the prophet" is "the fact that he promotes the decay of ethically uncriticized piety." (1:70). "The elan that religions display at their outset lessens automatically and not improperly till it is spent." (1:70). "Whereupon, improperly now, the forms, instrumentalities, and institutions of religion offer themselves as religion." (1:70). Then is needed the prophet. "He can recall religion to its better self." "If we are to be adequately personal, we must not be mere receptacles into which ultimate values are poured; we must ourselves be fountains of ultimate values." (1:70). And Dr. Coe further stresses inquiry: "prophetism has no affinity with the doctrine of natural de-

pravity; its affinity is with rigorous inquiry, in our time with sociological inquiry." (1:70).

Our topic has to do with Dr. Coe's conception of moral and spiritual education. Some might think that this has been forgotten. But no; Dr. Coe's emphasis on "human personality," on "inquiry" as the "core of personality," and on the setting of personality "within the natural order"—all these have given us clearer understanding of the meaning of *moral* and *spiritual* for Dr. Coe and have prepared for education as the means for the realization of true full personality.

In the quotations that follow the language may seem dated (1924), but the ideals upheld by Dr. Coe we can hardly doubt will hold to the end. "The project method has come into education—has been coming into it for more than a century—to stay there and to grow until it dominates schools of all grades." (4:vi). This method has not been arbitrarily adopted, but is "primarily a law of mind and character." (4:vi). "The term project," we must understand, "makes purposing, and particularly purposing together, its distinctive mark . . . purposeful self-guidance." (4:vi). Purposing in its full sense and range "is nothing less than the process—and it alone contains the generative force—whereby one comes to one's self as a person. Used collectively, it is the democratic process." (4:vi). "Purposeful activity on the part of the pupil is the most educational experience in the world." (4:v).

But we who would utilize the principle of "purposeful activity" must not be interested simply "in freedom and the consequences thereof." If we are to serve society morally, we must consider also "the conditions and the limitations of freedom." To do this we must recognize the place of ideals in conduct, "that pupils do form ideals," and "that ideals represent a species of motivation, an actual or possible inner law" in the use of purposeful activity. (4:10). We must also recognize the place of natural law in ordinary life. "Mutual submission by teacher and pupil to conditions known by both to be imposed by natural law tends to release the powers of both teacher and pupil, and thus tends to enfranchise both." (4:46). In this way, teach-

ers can learn to give up arbitrary control of pupils, and pupils can learn to control themselves with reference to actual conditions of life and the ideals they are meanwhile building.

"In every school project, then, society and the pupil jointly purpose." (4:60). "The teacher who makes the shift [in attitude] undergoes a marked transformation." "Between pupil and teacher . . . a new type of joint willing is born." (4:60). And let it be clear, in the teaching where such "joint willing" is effected, the teacher's effort is not "merely a subtler mode of conforming the pupil to a predetermined social model," it requires "a sincere uncamouflaged presentation of social reality." (4:60). And this "presentation" is not simply a telling by the teacher of "the facts" as his superior knowledge sees them, it is an honest joint inquiry into the pertinent facts in order to find out what is wise to do. "Cooperative willing, then, is the essence of the project, and cooperative willing implies renunciation of arbitrariness on both sides." (4:64).

This way of teaching requires that we "give the same kind of respect to the personality of a child that we give to the adult . . . the very same processes (graded, of course, to children's growing capacity) of social recognition, mutual adjustment, and mutual control." (4:66). Dr. Coe recognizes eight types of activity for developing effective moral responsibility. (4:99f).

1. "Self-government projects." — "Good order" must not be accepted as "a sufficient end." "Understanding and fellowship" among all involved must always also be sought.

2. "Philanthropic projects." — Let pupils study not only to relieve distress, but also to understand "the causes of distress, and what men are doing to remove these causes."

3. "Civic projects." — Proper social-moral attitudes require more than "acquaintance with civic undertakings." Nor will knowledge of, and admiration for, our social machinery suffice. "Attention should always be given to dissatisfied elements in the population" and to the unsolved problems that fall to the oncoming citizen.

4. "Current-events projects." — In these we must open the minds of pupils to issues. "What is back of this incident?" "What need ought to have a hearing?"

5. "History projects, and biographical studies." — "Not to furnish examples for imitation, not to sweep the pupil into an unthinking emotion of patriotism, but to deepen his insight into the facts and issues of life."

6. "Projects relating to business and industry." — The "main focus" should always be "the human beings concerned and what happens to them."

7. "Projects related to modes of living." "The failures of our individual and social life should have a place here along side of the

great successes, and both should be traced to their roots."

8. "Projects in world-friendship." Here Dr. Coe in 1928 anticipates today's problems of the United Nations. "The possibility of deliberately extending our acquaintance with our fellows with a view to contributing to the formation of a genuine world brotherhood."

My effort has been to let Dr. Coe's own words state his fundamental position. As to judging Dr. Coe for his work in religious education, in my own opinion his insight into the nature of moral and spiritual values place him among the very highest yet to attack these problems. I have known few if any to equal him, none I believe to surpass him.

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## VI

### A TRIBUTE

George Albert Coe's life-work spanned an era of rare creativeness in American Christianity. Three religious movements were rising to affect profoundly the forces of religion during the closing decades of the 19th and the opening years of the 20th century. Dr. Coe took a significant part in each of these causes. They were:

First: The development of the historical method of the study and interpretation of the Bible.

Second: The rise and dynamic growth of the so-called "social gospel."

Third: The conception and practical promotion of the field of religious education.

These three movements introduced the most significant changes in historic Christianity since the Protestant Reformation. A noted galaxy of American scholars and teachers have expounded their basic principles and re-charted the course not only of theological education but also of the program

of local churches. Most important, these causes have reoriented the religious experience of millions of American people. He who reviews Dr. Coe's voluminous writings will find ample evidence of his concern for and a measure of his direction of each of these religious interests.

George A. Coe was especially concerned with the modern religious education movement. This field early became his life interest, personally and professionally. What Dewey meant to the public school, Coe became to the church school. He enlisted his germinal mind and his social passion in rethinking religion in terms of the needs of man's experience, the growth of human personality, and the social issues affecting the well-being of every individual. Among the many contributions Dr. Coe has made to religious education, three concepts stand out in marked relief. They remain powerful ideas with which every educator must come

to terms, if he would grasp the significance of the religious impulse in the education of persons for fit and meaningful living in this world.

The first concept is that of religion. Dr. Coe challenged the prevailing idea that religion constituted one among many interests that persons entertained in their endeavor to work out their way of life on this planet. That view conceived of religion as a church-centered faith and an other-worldly approach to man's high value. He saw in that viewpoint a grave danger not only bifurcating human life into the secular and the sacred, but splitting persons into other-worldly "religious" and this worldly "pagan" aspects of their daily experience. Coe brought to the philosophy of religion the idea that religion at its best is a process of re-evaluating all human values and elevating them to a unifying position of divine significance. For him no human act or life-interest was secondary or inconsequential in value, unless the free agent chose to make it so. On the contrary, every activity and interest engaging man had inherent in them potentially qualitative aspects which were of the very essence of religion, and which needed clarification and direction to become the vehicle of man's out-reaching to God.

The second concept contributed by George A. Coe, that has become pervasive in its implications, is "the democracy of God." He saw clearly the imperialistic, exploitive, and favoritistic assumptions implicit in the historic concept, "the kingdom of God." Coe repudiated kingships of every kind, claiming that they were the products of a former cultural age and an outmoded ideology. They were, in consequence, unfit to win the loyalty of men who had drunk deeply of the living waters of democracy. Coe insisted that any idea of God, meaningful for purposes of human devotion and fellowship, should embrace an ethics of deity comparable to the moral responsibilities of man as conceived within the framework of social democracy. This idea represented for Coe much more than an interest in semantics; it pointed up an ethical sensitivity in contemplation of the

character of God and his ways of dealing with man that heretofore had not registered adequately in Judaeo-Christian history.

The third contribution that George A. Coe has made to the thinking of his time is the concept of the socio-economic-religious quality of human personality. He was not content to repeat the shibboleth that man is his brother's keeper. He took pains to spell out that idea in terms of the trenchant social forces that *can* make men brothers. To help him in this definitive task Coe drew upon the emergent findings of the natural and social sciences. Among them were the ideas that man had evolved from lower orders of life and possessed inherently in his nature the potentialities to build his own personal worth and a sturdy human society in fellowship with God, the Father of man; that human personality represents the developmental nature of man as an interacting individual in inseparable and intimate relations with his fellows in all his doings; and that the superior moral and spiritual life of a person is acquired, if at all, through the everyday, ordinary experiences in which man is involved with his neighbors in carrying forward the structural interests of society. Thus religion and education in religion, as well as religion in education, are as much concerned with how a man lives in his family circle as in what his relationships are with the church, in the ethical nature of his operations in the marketplace as well as in his behavior before the sanctuary altar, and in the quality of human enlistment man engages in political activity and in self-government as much as in his private contemplation and prayers. Coe contributed to the idea of religion and religious education the conviction that every aspect of human enlistment is potentially sacred and should, therefore, be so regarded in order that it may become a vehicle of the good life and a dynamic element in the democracy of God.

Above all, George A. Coe loved his fellowmen. One needed only to meet him face to face to discover in the gleam of his eye and the warmth of his conversation a persuasive affection for the sons of man. Those who



studied with him in the classroom were particularly rewarded with the rare fellowship he engendered and which he carried over into his home where he loved to entertain. However, Coe's affection was in no sense sentimental. It was morally realistic in which he insisted upon channeling the intimate interpersonal friendliness he shared into activities that were practical and effective in raising the level of social relationships in every phase of human life. His rare ca-

pacify for affection was as sharp in sensitivity to subtle forms of evil as it was to the nuances of human good. He despised sham and make-believe; he was particularly hospitable to the underprivileged. George A. Coe's tempering of religion, ethics and human love was so rare that when one thinks of him he thinks of the wisdom voiced by the prophet who said, "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

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## VII

### WE WERE FRIENDS

For over fifty years George Albert Coe and I were friends; for most of them fellow workers in causes for the common good, and for some of them professional colleagues. For forty-five summers we were together on the same lake in the backwoods of Northern Ontario, in camps about half a mile apart connected by him with a self installed telephone. For a number of years there was only one other camp on the lake, also belonging to friends. For two years, after he resigned from Union Theological Seminary, he lived with us in New Jersey in preference to a New York apartment. Our children speak of him as Uncle George. So we came to know each other through and through and our friendship, unchecked by the minor strains that come in all close human relations, deepened through the years. His last letters increased their emphasis on "affectionate regards." With him words always meant deeds when deeds were needed. In any difficulty, personal or official, whatever aid he could render was always forthcoming. In all truth he was a never failing friend.

I first heard of him while a freshman at the University of Southern California which he had just left for a chair at Northwestern, where I had originally planned to enter. I went there the next year and majored with him. I found at once that he was teaching more than philosophy and was more than a professor. Graduate of Boston University School of Theology, student of Borden P. Bowne whom William James used to call, with respect, the Methodist philosopher, with the experience of a graduate fellowship in Germany, Professor Coe was opening up a new approach to religion, and deeper meanings for it, in the day when Methodists were just beginning to feel the impact of Darwin and the scientific method. This he was doing with the union of keenness of mind and strength of moral conviction which made him the influential leader he later became in religious education.

On Sunday afternoons he and Mrs. Coe opened their home to students for what he called *conversazione*. There would be the singing of a few carefully chosen hymns.



Mrs. Coe, accomplished pianist, member of the faculty of the School of Music, would play. Then he would open up some religious topic and call for questions and discussion. In this way, as in the classroom and in student interviews, he was gathering materials and working out approaches that soon appeared in his two early books — *The Spiritual Life* and *The Religion of a Mature Mind*.

At this time the core of his religious life, as it later appeared in the Preface to his *Psychology of Religion*, was already formed: "Not far from the middle of my college days it was settled . . . that thenceforth I should look for the gravity of religion in the moral will . . ." "The religious enterprise is to me the most important undertaking in life . . . Life seems to me to be an ethical enterprise." "My personal religion, in fact, consists first and foremost in the emancipation of social desires . . ."

When I began to study with Prof. Coe I had already taken the same path, opened up for me by a little book on Christianity and the social question by a well known economist, Richard T. Ely. It was listed in the course of study for the examination of those desiring to enter the Methodist ministry on probation. Outside the curriculum of Northwestern I was seeking further knowledge of the social meaning of religion through an analysis of all the sayings of Jesus that had any bearing on the social problems of our day. So the professor and the student were increasingly drawn together in mutual development. The first aid he got in his department was by employing me in my senior year to correct the logic papers. When he secured his first appropriation for a full time assistant, he came down back of the Chicago Stockyards, where I was preaching, and offered me the position. I answered that I could not then leave my work there. Very well he said, but you will never fully express yourself until you teach. Years later, when I held a professorship at the Boston University School of Theology he proposed my name for the vacant chair of Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary. So we became colleagues.

Because for both of us religion was ethical

and social, and we both believed in the union of theory and practice, we found ourselves increasingly drawn together in the same undertakings. He was one of the first members of the Methodist Federation for Social Service of which for over thirty years I was the Secretary, and to which he left a fourth of his modest estate. As the movement broadened its field of study and action, from community service to the labor struggle, then to the social order and its economic base, he was always for advance. When the inevitable attack of reaction was unleashed, inside and outside the church, he never counselled retreat.

In my first position as Head-Resident of Northwestern University Settlement, I found out that he was a good man to have at one's side in a battle of the "good fight." The issue was un-democratic control from the seat of authority on the campus, and he was one of the only two members of the faculty who both saw it and stood straight. We shared antipathy to sham, hypocrisy and double talk. It was one of the delights of our years together, around the campfire or in front of the blazing hearth, to hear the pungent words with which he would strip the cloak of hypocrisy from the Pharisees of our day. The smear tactics of our red baiters and witch hunters, the threats of our fascist fanatics, never drove him to cover.

His faith in the democratic process he continuously proved by his works. Together we joined the Teachers Union as soon as its doors were open to professors. He actively supported the American Civil Liberties Union of which I was Chairman for twenty years, and himself fought hard for academic freedom. In 1925 he headed a Citizens Committee of 100 in New York to combat discrimination by the Board of Education against three teachers, union members, charged with left wing politics. As Chairman of the Committee on Militarism in Education in 1928 he asked Presidential candidates to state their views on compulsory military drill in colleges; and in 1932 he presented a petition to the House Military Affairs Committee, signed by 327 college presidents, professors and educators, urging "with-

drawal of the War Department from the field of Education."

We were drawn further together by the same love of outdoor life—the trail and the voyageur's canoe, the campfire and the balsam bough bed, the woods and hills, the lakes and streams of an unsettled land. His father preached in upper New York State, and he grew up in summertime on the St. Lawrence River, learning how to handle boat, rod and reel. With him fishing was an art to be studied as well as a recreation. His wife, whose untimely death affected the whole course of his life, came from California and in our early acquaintance he invited me to spend a summer there with him, camping and fishing in the Sierras. In his eightieth year he caught the record trout for our lake; in his eighty-ninth he rowed his boat over to our camp.

For some years he owned a small motor cruiser on the Hudson and twice he navigated it from New York to Sault Ste. Marie at the foot of Lake Superior, through rivers, canals and several of the Great Lakes. Well I remember a night ride with him down the coast of Lake Superior to keep ahead of a rising storm. When we tied up next morning at Sault Ste. Marie another motor yachtsman came out on the pier and asked "Didn't you fellows know the warnings to stay in port were out?" Still more vivid is the memory of the day when, from his companion boat, he was teaching me to sail a twenty foot skiff. Getting too close to the hilly shore before coming about a backlash of wind tripped the boom and the boat capsized. As I slid out I got caught between the rail and the rudder line that ran along it, with just enough of my head above water to breathe. In a minute he sailed alongside, let his sail go slack, stepped on my upturned boat and, with its rope in one hand, drew his sheath knife with the other and cut me free. Then I crawled across to his boat and he sailed me to his camp to get dry and warm. We continuously pooled our observations of nature, its animals, birds and trees. Also our interest in woodworking. For some years we lived under pioneer conditions and prac-

tically all our camp furniture was hand made. One would get a way of making something needed and the other would copy or improve it. Came the day in advancing years when he sought the aid of a small gasoline powered machine and there we parted company, for to me machinery is something only to be endured when necessity compels, just as baseball and other outdoor games had no appeal for him. Indoors he was always ready for fun.

On Sundays the three camps on the lake got together for supper and the evening. There was singing, sometimes out on the lake, usually on a porch or around a camp fire. He knew an astonishing number of old college and popular songs and, until his hearing failed, could sing them in delightful fashion. Then there was talk, on matters grave and gay, to which he added humor, wit and penetrating insights. He was a master hand at spinning tall yarns so that to those who did not know him they would seem completely real. It was then his delight to release them from the illusion. In later years, when his hearing affliction limited discussion, he would bring to camp each year a varied selection of new books to read aloud in the evening to his companions.

Our last verbal discussion concerned the recent moral decline in Protestantism and, of course, its relation to "the sickness of the acquisitive society." In the preceding two winters our correspondence had centered on the nature and challenge of Marxist philosophy. He was keenly interested in points made from source material only recently available. At the end of the discussion he wrote: "I have known only a few of my Christian friends to recognize the truth that what is splitting the world is the ethical core of Marxism, not the political system that has developed in Russia." When I asked could I quote him he answered: "Quote as much as you like. For we are not done with Marxism when we weigh the merits and demerits of the Soviet government, nor when we choose between the communist and the anti-communist ideology: Marx raised the fundamental ethical question whether it is humane or just that a man's sustenance should depend upon

his contributing by his labor to the private profit of another. This ethical core of Marxism is being ignored by both the politi-

cal and the ecclesiastical thought that is most characteristic of the United States today."

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## VIII IN EVANSTON

Dr. Coe came to Evanston in 1891 as a member of the faculty of Northwestern University. He was a graduate of Boston University School of Theology. While a student there he had met and shortly before graduation had become engaged to Sarah Knowland. In a beautifully written biography of her, he says that while delivering his graduation oration in old Tremont Temple in Boston, he was alive to only one thing in the vast audience, "there sat one who had just spoken the word that for me was a word of destiny."

She was an accomplished musician, ambitious for a professional musical career, but she consented to marry him, even to go to China with him as a missionary, a call which he considered for a time. But his work was not to be in the foreign field. Instead they were wed in the early fall of 1888 and went to the University of Southern California, which was then apparently having a difficult time trying to keep its teaching staff paid. He says of it that it was "mostly raw edges, and the financial management was wretched." They lived for a year in a boarding house, but in their second year built a cottage. They had married with "a mutual understanding of her ambition" in the musical field so when in 1889 she was offered the direction of the piano department, she gladly accepted, and, he recalls, earned almost as much as her husband. They bore their "share of general discomfort," but were more than happy. Both, however, were desirous of studying abroad, so when Boston

University awarded George Albert the travelling fellowship for 1890, they were overjoyed, and as soon as possible were in Germany, then the Mecca for American students in various fields.

After a year in Germany, he was called to Northwestern University, but so well agreed were they that each must have the best possible preparation, that he insisted that she stay on for two additional seasons in Berlin, he returning in the summers to be with her. In the autumn of 1893, they took up life together in Evanston, where she was invited to teach in the music department of the University, and began to play a significant role in the cultural life of the college and the community. She was a very successful teacher, concert artist and public lecturer on music, much in demand not only locally, but in the larger community outside Evanston. She began to do creative work in the field of composition. She became very much interested in native American Indian music, and wrote what she called the "Melodrama of Hiawatha" in which she brought together a number of Indian melodies, and adapted them to her purposes. After several performances, which were exceptionally well received, the work was published in 1905. But before she was able to carry to completion many ideas for other compositions, one an opera, illness forced her to abandon the work.

They lived at first in rented rooms, but finally in 1894 they built a home, and when college again opened "had a house, and a

debt, but little more." It was purposely built to serve two purposes, to furnish an adequate music room for her, and to make it possible to have gatherings of students in their home. Both shared the feeling that something should be done for the religious and moral life by providing an open home for students on Sunday afternoons during the long winters.

These gatherings which were known as *conversazione* were, in part, social occasions for good fellowship, but usually Professor Coe would suggest some topic for discussion, either religious, philosophical, or sometimes a practical problem affecting student life. At least two students, now old residents of Evanston, have recalled their pleasure and satisfaction in being privileged to share in these *conversazione*. After two years these were superseded by a regular Sunday afternoon mass meeting on the campus to which prominent speakers were brought.

But the Coe home was not therefore closed to students. Open house for all students was held around the holiday seasons, and frequently smaller or larger groups of their students were invited in for tea, or dinner, or for an evening. One long retired member of the old Northwestern Academy faculty recalls that this was the one faculty home, at the time at least, which was open to students.

One wonders, at this distance removed in time, how a woman who was carrying the responsibility of full time employment in the University music school, and constantly participating in the cultural life of both the local and larger community could have found the time and strength to welcome so many into her home. But writes her husband of her: "Our home never ceased to seem to her to be a gift in trust for others."

She had finally withdrawn from the University School of Music, and was planning to carry on the private school, which it had been her original ambition and intention to found, when her fatal illness overtook her, and she died of cancer August 24, 1905.

Professor Coe carried on alone, and never remarried. In her memory he made a gift of much of her music, and an endowment of

\$5000 for its maintenance, to form one of the first music rooms to be established in any public library. It is known as the Sadie Knowland Coe Music Collection. It was for years unique in that here might be found for loan, not merely published music and books about music, but, for several years, pianola rolls, to be played either in the music room, or at home on one's own pianola, once quite a common instrument in North Shore homes. In later years as the pianola was being superseded by the phonograph, the question arose as to how the fund should be spent. It was characteristic of Dr. Coe that he should write: "I expect the Library Board to use its own judgment freely in administering the fund and collection. I desire to repeat this and to make it most explicit." As I write this I can almost hear him saying it and catch the sparkle of his eye and the tone of his voice. "I have long held," he continued "that donors to educational and similar institutions would do well to take their hands off their gifts."

In 1906 Professor Coe issued a small book, privately printed, in her memory. It is entitled *Sadie Knowland Coe, a Chapter in a Life*. The book tells briefly the story of her life and work. It is a moving tribute to a remarkable person. It says very little about George Albert Coe himself, but the book really tells a great deal about him, or at least about an aspect of his life of which the public knew but little.

"In her home as nowhere else," he wrote, "the wealth of her personality spent itself forth as California's sun glows down upon the mountains. It was such self-giving and self-forgetting as makes credible the love of God wherein all meaning is. The object upon which such affection is lavished can never henceforth become poor. Time and death and eternity have found their meaning for him, and that meaning is good. Death cannot rob him, because the love that makes separation so tragic is itself the realization of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The very intensity of her suffering is evidence that death is swallowed up in victory." (p. 91).

Dr. Coe's years at Northwestern Univer-

sity were growing years. His was an active mind. He was interested in the newer approach to religion that the scientific age had brought. He was one of the pioneer workers in the then almost unknown field of the psychology of religion. In his classes he carefully observed his own students. He made one of the very early objective studies in the field, published in his *Spiritual Life*. (N. Y., 1900) His name must be linked with that of William James, Starbuck, Leuba, and other early pioneers in the field.

In his classes he was meeting the troublesome questions of the thoughtful students of the day, who were just beginning, in this, then somewhat provincially minded school, just on the verge of becoming a university, to feel the effects of the newer biblical criticism and the impact of the scientific method upon religious faith. In his *Religion of a Mature Mind*, (Chicago, 1902), he undertook to state some of the conclusions growing out of these questioning years. That the book was sometimes referred to publicly by ministers of the day as "The Irreligion of an Immature Mind," is an indication that the direction of his thought was offensive to many conservative thinkers. I recall how earnestly some of my father's fellow ministers of the Kansas Conference warned him that I should by all means be kept from going to Union Theological Seminary, since the most dangerous man in Methodism had just left Northwestern to go to Union.

It is a matter of some satisfaction personally that neither my father nor I were affected by their warning, and that I not only went to Union, but that I chose to do my major work under him. It would probably surprise some of those gentlemen to know that it was precisely in a class on Methodist Church Polity, taught informally in his own apartment in the faculty quadrangle during several evenings, that I ceased to be merely an hereditary Methodist, and became consciously, and by definite personal choice, a confirmed member of that church.

Professor Coe was a regular attendant at church. He, while much concerned about religious education in that early period, gave his time and thought rather to the underly-

ing problems involved than to the practical participation in it in the local church. One who knew him well, and who was a leader in the Sunday School work of the church remarked, with just a bit of the practical worker's attitude toward the theorist, that he stayed in his office and wrote books about it, but never came down to the church to give it his direction. One can't help wondering, or can he? which, in his case, was the better part.

His students liked him. He was precise in his statements, and very provocative. He sometimes impressed people as reserved or distant, but his desire to have students in his home would seem to belie any such appearance. He was urbane, self-assured, spoke with great positiveness on matters upon which he had formed an opinion, but he was forever analyzing, rethinking, criticizing his own views. He left a deep impress upon the lives of many of those who sat in his classes.

Long before he severed his relationship with Northwestern his reputation was such that other institutions sought his services. He considered for a time, but decided against an invitation to go to the University of Chicago. When the call to Union Theological Seminary came, with the increased opportunity which this would give him to work in the field of religious education, he felt that he should go. With regret at leaving Northwestern and Evanston, where he and Mrs. Coe had spent so many happy years, he accepted the offer.

Shortly before he left, he made an address at Des Plaines Camp Ground, which the newspapers reported as very radical, theologically. When his leaving was announced, rumors began to circulate that he had been asked by the University to leave because of his theological views. The rumors were persistent enough to prove embarrassing to the administration. As an evidence that the University was in no way antagonistic to his views, it was agreed, after talking the matter over with him, to retain his name on the faculty list as Honorary Professor of Philosophy and Psychology of Religion. There it has remained until now, more than forty



years after his departure from Evanston. Only his death in the fall of 1951 would have prevented its continued appearance in the official publication of the University. Northwestern further honored him by conferring upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws in 1927.

A brief excerpt from a letter written by Professor Coe in response to an invitation to send a greeting to the fiftieth reunion of the class of '94, is thoroughly characteristic of the man:

"My associations with you were happy ones; there grew up a sense of fellowship that still abides with me. But how immature was your teacher of philosophy! Through most of your senior year I was only 30. Looking back from the standpoint of my 81

years, I realize how inexperienced I was. Any of you who took me seriously were subjected to great risks! I suspect that some of you did not take me seriously, and that those who did so discovered sooner or later a way to outgrow my teachings. I, too, needed to outgrow a considerable part of them, and I believe that I have done so. Now I am happy in the thought that you and I were growing together—. Happy indeed are those who have a life philosophy that grows instead of petering out when old habits of thought no longer sustain one—. There is enough of the old professor left in me to yearn that you may experience personal growth and deepened satisfaction through the very events and conditions that now shake the ancient foundations."

CHARLES S. BRADEN

*Professor of History and Literature  
of Religion, Northwestern University*

## IX

### AT UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Dr. Coe in 1909 was called from Northwestern University's chair of philosophy to be professor of religious education at Union Theological Seminary in New York. For him this offered an opportunity to concentrate his effort in an area with which he was greatly concerned and to which in part through the Religious Education Association, he had already made contribution. It became his task to pioneer in the training of theological students as teachers of religion. In so doing he explored and defined religious education. Perhaps his greatest contribution lay in his rare ability to convey to his students his own deep conviction that religion was both attitude and practice, both appreciation and application, both a man's individual beliefs and his social behaviors, and that therefore religion must be taught as it is learned, through shared effort and activity. The Bible was for him a great Source Book of man's experiences with God

and one another, their failures and their successes. It was to be used for the light it shed upon the nature of God and His will for us, upon the ways in which we in our time might meet life's problems and opportunities.

For Union Seminary, Dr. Coe's coming marked a new effort to equip a ministry capable of leading church members, young and old, to a deepened and informed understanding of the Bible as the Word of God. Earlier, from 1901 through 1907, Dr. Richard Morse Hodge had been appointed instructor in "Biblical Literature and Methods of Teaching for Lay Workers" including "Extension Courses." But the Seminary student had received but scant preparation for professional responsibilities centering in Sunday School and Young People's Society. And the published materials available for his use were largely inadequate. He was usually spending some time each week in "field



work" in a local church involving him in some Sunday School teaching and in work with youth, but there was no direct relation between field work and classroom, and little if any supervision of his church activities by the Seminary.

Dr. Francis Brown who invited Dr. Coe to membership in the Union Faculty, had become President of Union Seminary. He was a staunch friend of freedom in the service of truth, as he had well proved some fifteen years earlier when he valiantly defended Dr. Briggs in his heresy trial before the New York Presbytery and the General Assembly.

It is hardly possible in brief compass to do full justice to Dr. Coe's influence and accomplishments during the thirteen years of his stay at Union. Due in part to his personal charm and friendliness, in part to the vigor and conviction of his delivery, his own always apparent interest and enthusiasm, and his concern to understand his students, his courses became popular. Because of his broad philosophical training and his psychological knowledge he was able to defend and to sustain his sometimes upsetting and often provocative pronouncements. He had the knack of driving home his points, sometimes by unforgettable illustration, sometimes by shocking contrast with the expected, always with eagerness and the joy of the searcher who finds,—head and shoulders thrust a little forward, eyes alight and index finger moving like a rapier to the attack. His classes were never dull,—though at times they left one wearied with the struggle to think and wishing the lecturer had at least a little followed his own advice and given his hearers a chance really to discuss with him the issues he had raised and so forcefully settled.

Through the mounting number of his graduates in the ministry at home and on the mission fields, through his writings and his leadership in the Religious Education Association and in many church groups his influence spread widely. Union Seminary became a recognized leader in this developing field of religious effort and the practice

of religious education as a profession became for many more appealing than the ministry itself. But always Dr. Coe taught with the full task of the ministry in mind. His students came to see the church as a religious educational institution and the minister as primarily an educator. In spite of his enthusiasm he was not dogmatic. He stressed always the need of re-evaluating our values and reorganizing our lives to fit our altered evaluations. And those who knew him at all personally were deeply aware of an intellectual and spiritual receptivity bordering at times upon the mystical which made one sure that in his own often untraditional way he walked with God.

His resignation from Union Seminary in 1922 came as a shocking surprise to most of his colleagues. No doubt personalities that clashed were part of the trouble, as was Dr. Coe's hatred of compromise on principles that he felt to be important. So also and more positively were involved his personal loyalties to friends and his sense of administrative responsibility. It was deemed fortunate that after his resignation had been accepted, Teachers College, the Seminary's near neighbor and collaborator, persuaded him to accept a professorship there. For thus many Seminary students were enabled during the five years that preceded his retirement to sit at the feet of three of religious education's great teachers now dead, Adelaide Case, Harrison Elliott and George Albert Coe.

In a memorial to Dr. Coe published in the *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* for January, 1952, Professor Frank W. Herriott has, I think, caught up in two short sentences of that tribute the very essence of his character and the secret of his power among us:

"Central in his philosophy and practices were two complementary commitments: a scientific attitude toward all facts, and a loving attitude toward all persons. Out of these sprang his passion for social justice and his conviction that the social issues of the present are 'the call of God to our pupils.'"

ARTHUR L. SWIFT, JR.  
Professor of Church and Community,  
Union Theological Seminary

## X

### AT TEACHERS COLLEGE

As I look back to my association with Dr. Coe in the nineteen twenties when he was teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University, there are certain emphases in his teaching which made a deep impression on those of us whom he taught. His passion for social justice was woven in to all of his teaching. He was not only concerned about the larger social issues of eliminating poverty and bringing in a new social order, but he inquired into the hours of work and wages of the building service employees and the stenographers at Teachers College and Union Theological Seminary. I remember how he questioned me frequently about the kind of housing in which students were living. The ethical implications of a subject never escaped his attention in private conversations or in classroom discussion. It was his firm conviction that learning in this field required appropriate social action. His book *A Social Theory of Religious Education* reveals many illustrations of his deep understanding of how social justice is taught. I quote a paragraph: "So, in moral instruction nothing so effectively shakes pupil and teacher out of moral conventionality as to face the actual, present struggle of men for justice, and especially to take some part in it."<sup>1</sup> Although he believed that there could be no compromise when struggling against evil, in his teaching he placed primary emphasis on the importance of love of God and one's neighbors. He states his idea thus: "When we get into the struggle to put love into effective action, when we insist upon getting results, then two things happen: We love with a new fervor, and we see the nature of the issue as we never saw it before."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Social Theory of Religious Education*. p. 342.

<sup>2</sup>*Op. cit.* p. 392.

Dr. Coe saw the problems of woman's place in society as an important one in building democracy. Few leaders have treated this particular problem of democracy with so much understanding. In speaking of women in the home he said, "The household labor of women, and the bearing and care of children, are to be treated as a professional, skilled occupation—a sphere for ambition, study, and social recognition. That women who devote themselves to these duties have at present so scanty recognition as producers, being regarded as dependents upon their husbands, or as being supported by the industry of another, is a partial indication of the reconstructive work that has to be done by education."<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Coe frequently discussed the place of the women who after leaving Teachers College became directors of religious education in churches. He asked questions about their status in relationship to the ministers with whom they worked, to the officials to whom they might be responsible. He always asked about their salaries in relation to the professional men employed in the same church. He stood firmly for the principle of equal pay for equal work. He was not a feminist, he was living his belief in the democracy of God.

Under Dr. Coe's teaching his students dropped their narrow prejudiced views about religion for broader and more profound ones. A phrase he often used describes one aspect of their growth: "Their social attachments expanded from narrow to wider groups." I doubt that any other teacher in modern times has brought deeper meaning into the concept of Christian fellowship and the processes by which it might be achieved.

<sup>3</sup>*Op. cit.* p. 70.

MARGARET FORSYTHE  
National Board, Y.W.C.A.

## XI

### OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Words such as "recreation" or "play" fail to do full justice to the part of Mr. Coe's life to which they refer. His outdoor activities were not just a means of recovering health and vigor for his work as a scholar, writer, and teacher. They influenced his thinking and writing to a degree that is rare for anyone whose profession calls for city living.

Not until he was in his forties, when he began to spend his summers in Canada, did I share with him his vacation experiences. With sail, oar, and paddle he had become an adept during boyhood summers spent with his father in the Thousand Islands. His knowledge of camping and his skill in fly-casting had been developed in the Sierras, while he was a young professor at the University of Southern California.

In the Algoma District of the Province of Ontario, about thirty miles by road east of Sault Ste. Marie, lies a forest-surrounded lake of clear, deep water—Lonely Lake, two miles in length and half a mile or more in width. The first permanent camp on this lake was built—I think in 1904—by Mr. Coe's friend, Dr. Harry F. Ward, who had discovered the lake indirectly through Mr. and Mrs. Coe. Algoma District is in Hiawatha country; and the Coes had learned about it as a result of the interest of Mrs. Coe, an accomplished musician, in securing Ojibway themes as a basis for her musical composition to accompany Longfellow's poem.

In the late spring of 1906, following the tragic year of Mrs. Coe's death, Mr. Coe was induced by Mr. Ward to go up from Evanston to Lonely Lake, where he built a log cabin. That was the birth of Camp Minnewawa—a camp to which Mr. Coe returned year after year down to the summer of 1950. For a considerable period of time, the only camps on the lake were those of Mr. Coe, of Mr. Ward, and of their friends, Dr. Frederick Sheets and Mr. W. E. Watt.

Beginning with a small, one-room cabin, Camp Minnewawa was gradually expanded

to accommodate with comfort Mr. Coe's friends from Evanston and elsewhere. To this day, however, it retains its rustic character, and it still seems in keeping with the deep forest that lies so close behind it.

As family friends in our high-school days, James Hayes and I were privileged to be among Mr. Coe's guests during the first summer. Less than an hour after our arrival, our lessons in camp living began with mild participation in the cooking of supper, followed by the far more exciting experience of catching lake trout for next day's dinner. As yet the season was early, so that the trout were still to be found in shallow water. Later they would go deep; but if one knew where and how—and Mr. Coe knew—they could be caught by patient still fishing or else by trolling with a metal line. To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Coe's largest trout still holds the record for Lonely Lake. In those early days, one had to go to near-by Iron Lake to catch the small-mouth bass, and Mr. Coe developed the knack of finding them even when the rest of us would fail. But I would not dare to say, even if I knew, whether the laurels as a bass fisherman should go to him, to Mr. Ward, to Mr. Sheets, or to Mr. Davis whose camp is located right on Iron Lake.

The District of Algoma is dotted with inland lakes, many of them interconnected by streams that will float a canoe subject to occasional portaging. In the days of his youthful vigor, Mr. Coe would guide the members of his camp on canoe trips lasting several days and would sometimes carry his cedar canoe on his shoulders while following the faint blazes of an old trail. Mr. Coe was light—I doubt whether he weighed more than 125 pounds in those days—but he was sinewy and agile, and his muscular coordinations, especially in the handling of boats, were a joy to watch.

In later years, the canoe trips had to yield to less strenuous occupations. Somewhat to my surprise in view of his earlier interest

in photography (he had worked at times with a Graflex and at times with a stereoscopic camera), his enthusiasm for this hobby waned. Instead, camp carpentry engaged his interest. For this purpose he built a workshop and included in its equipment a multipurpose power tool. It is my impression that, in the design and construction of chairs and tables, he was influenced by the "Craftsman" furniture of some forty years ago, with its sturdy unadorned, masculine style. Even more directly he profited from the workmanship of his friend and camp companion, Dr. E. L. McEwen, who had developed a hand skilled in cabinet making as a diversion from his arduous duties as a Chicago medical specialist. In the erection of the camp buildings Mr. Coe took but little part in the heavy construction. But he drew up the specifications, alone or in company with Dr. McEwen. "The Roost," a combined boathouse (downstairs) and open-air dormitory (upstairs), is a triumph of camp architecture. It was built from a model designed and constructed jointly by McEwen and Coe.

Of Mr. Coe's varied outdoor interests — and I have not mentioned all of them, such as his ice skating during his life in Evanston as a professor at Northwestern — the one that most impressed his friends was his fondness for small boats and for their navigation. To him a boat was not just a utility. He loved the cut and the workmanship of a fine boat as a musician might love the design and the wood of a Cremona violin. Loyal to the days of his youth, he favored the two-pointed St. Lawrence River Skiff for rowing, sailing, and small motors. And how he disliked the noisy, moody outboard motors even though he reluctantly conceded their convenience!

Even Mr. Coe's New York friends who never visited him at his Canadian camp will recall his one-time flagship — *School's Out*. Made to his order by a Boston shipbuilder, she was a trim, white, 36-foot cabin cruiser with a Sterling gasoline engine and with a mast and sail for emergency use. There were bunks for two in the cabin and for two in the cockpit. On her maiden voyage from Boston to her home port of New York, Mr.

Coe was accompanied by a professional navigator. Thereafter, he was his own skipper. At least twice he took *School's Out* up to his sister's summer home in the Thousand Islands, going and returning either via the Erie Canal route between New York and Lake Ontario or else via the Champlain Canal. On one of the return trips, his crew consisted of Professor Julius Bewer of Union Theological Seminary, Mr. Henry Cope, Secretary of the Religious Education Association, and myself. As a result of a too strenuous throw of the stern line, Mr. Cope fell off the boat into one of the locks of the Champlain Canal, with no ill effects except to his clothing.

The most ambitious voyage of *School's Out* was from New York City to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and up the little Echo River to a mooring only a few miles from Lonely Lake. During most of the voyage, I believe, Mr. Coe had only one companion — his very friendly and efficient Japanese employee. The little cruiser proved its seaworthiness in the choppy waters of Lake Erie. Among the several trips taken from "The Soo" was a run into Batchewanna Bay on the wild, North Shore of Lake Superior. This area is famous for the large, speckled-trout "coasters" that come into the big lake in the springtime. But *School's Out* arrived too late in the season for more than a sample of the wonderful game fish.

While teaching at Union Theological Seminary in New York, Mr. Coe was tempted by the possibility of flying his own airplane to and from his camp in the Canadian wilderness. He even went so far as to take several lessons in flying but was deterred from pursuing this ambition by incipient ear trouble, which interfered with his hitherto excellent sense of balance. In later years, he spent his winters in Southern California. Every summer, however, he would respond to the call of Lonely Lake and would make the long trip back to Algoma by way of his old home city, Evanston.

Years ago, while far away from his Canadian camp on a voyage around the world, Mr. Harry F. Ward gave expression to "The Lure of Lonely Lake" in verses which, I feel

sure, also speak for Mr. Coe. With Mr. Ward's permission, I quote the first stanza.

There's a call come down from the North  
today,  
With the whirr of the wild goose wing,  
It whispered softly at my desk;  
On the street I heard it sing.

Who calls? The cabin on the hill, whose  
great logs stand  
With folded arms to guard my sleep; a  
trusty band.  
The wide hearth in the gloaming, flinging  
shafts of light

From ancient trees against the gath'ring  
hosts of night.

The hills along the shore—those won-  
drous green. Who laid  
Them clear to far horizon, shade on shade?  
The water, crystal pure; blue as the sky in  
the rippling sunlit breeze,

Green as the heart of the ancient wood,  
in the shadow of the trees.

The lake is calling—hear it say:  
Drop your work and rest  
On the softness of my breast.  
Come away! Come away!

JAMES C. BONBRIGHT  
*Professor of Finance,*  
*Columbia University*

## XII

### AS A SPORTSMAN

George Albert Coe's youth was spent in the region of the Thousand Islands in New York State. His parents had a summer cottage at Thousand Island Park and many of his summer vacations as a boy were spent there on the St. Lawrence River. In those days transportation to and from the mainland and among the various fishing spots depended upon rowing and sailing. Out of this grew the St. Lawrence skiff, a slim double pointed row boat with retractable center board. They rowed easily and sailed well. Uncle George, as I knew him, was a master in handling these craft. In later years he imported these boats into Canada and we used them at his camp on Lonely Lake in Ontario. Sailing races, which usually occurred on windy Sundays, were almost always won by Mr. Coe, even with what appeared to be a fair handicap.

Fishing was good in the Thousand Islands and he became an excellent bass fisherman. When he moved to California for his early

teaching duties there, he transferred his activities to fly fishing for trout in the upper reaches of the Truckee River. His interest in fishing in all its forms persisted throughout his life.

Soon after the death of Mrs. Coe, Uncle George acquired by homestead two quarter sections of almost virgin timber land near the Soo. The property straddled two lakes and adjoined a similar camp property acquired by Dr. Harry F. Ward. In proving his claim a portion of the land was cleared as a garden area and a log cabin was built. It was as a visitor to this camp that my first acquaintance with Uncle George began. I was 15 months old at the time of my first trip, but I must confess that my earliest memories that are definite do not go much back of age six. I was a regular summer visitor at first for a few weeks with my parents and later as a resident for as much time as could be squeezed out of the summer vacation. To me, Camp was Heaven and Uncle George



was God. He knew all, could do all, and was willing to teach us what he knew.

The Camp was run in a very orderly manner. Meals came at regular times and the only unforgivable sin was to be late when the dinner gong rang. Uncle George did most of the cooking in the early days though he employed a cook as the camp group became larger and more complex. Everyone had certain chores and these were completed before any play projects were permitted. Discipline was firm and accomplished by a remarkable command of English delivered with the emphasis of a first sergeant whenever the occasion arose.

Learning to fish was a necessity and I can well remember rowing him all afternoon on hot August days after bass that just would not bite. There were times when fishing could hardly be considered a sport, for Uncle George always believed in rowing on to the second and third hole if he got no bites in the first. Boat and canoe repairs were a constant problem and one that he entrusted to no one. We learned how to reinforce ribs, repair cracked planking, mend sails, splice rope and tie knots. A regular training program of tests was completed before we were permitted to use boats or canoes alone. Among these were capsize drills with canoes in which he deliberately upset the canoe simulating various common accident situations.

The gasoline age finally came to the camp and an early outboard motor called the Koban appeared. This was one of the most unsatisfactory of the early outboards and the cause of numerous harrowing delays and long rows. Mr. Coe never swore but I can remember to this day some of his discussions relative to the competence of the Koban designers and manufacturers. This experience

was followed by a succession of outboard and inboard motors some of them begun with serious doubt as to the ultimate outcome. The Koban's successor was named the "I'll Try." There were others to follow for Uncle George bought boats the way some women buy new hats, to satisfy some deep psychological urge. I have frequently teased him about this and, although he admitted that there was some truth in the charge, he either would not or could not explain it.

Such was George Coe, sportsman. In his later years when portaging canoes and the like was more difficult for him, he turned to carpentry and other forms of handicraft as an outlet. He became a competent worker in metal and several pitchers and vases attest to his ability in this field. He remained a fisherman to the end and was always eager to try to coax a trout or a bass out of some hole that he alone remembered as having once produced a likely catch.

Among the many remarkable features of his camp life was the succession of guests who shared a portion of his summers. His early helpers—college students at the time, now eminent citizens in their own right—returned in later years to show their children the scenes of their earlier vacations. Colleagues in teaching and friends from all walks of life have spent memorable periods as his guests. The conversations involved a discussion of the day's work in a primitive environment and the highest political, psychological and philosophical abstractions. This was, indeed, a remarkable institution which reflected so fully the personality of a great man—sportsman, philosopher, teacher, liberal and the most rational human being I have ever known.

ERNEST G. MCEWEN, M.D.  
*Evanston, Illinois*

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### XIII

## A ONE TIME SECRETARY WRITES

I had just arrived from Greece. I was new to New York and to Union Theological Seminary. It was late in November and I was scared of everything and everybody. I was asked to see Prof. George Albert Coe and talk with him about courses and credits in his department. I approached his office with fear and trembling, only to find myself completely at ease as Dr. Coe welcomed me and patiently listened to the story of my rather limited academic background. He generously offered me the opportunity of attending his classes and gave me sound advice as to how to get the most out of them.

I sat mystified in his classes. For quite a while I could not follow him at all. His language was not familiar to me; his ideas were past my comprehension. I used to get lost as he talked about value and the value of values, life experiences and education, the scientific approach to religion, and that strange, if not impious, pet-phrase of his, "the democracy of God." I remember how shocked I was when once he said: "As one, who follows the scientific approach, I must entertain the hypothesis that there might not be a God." But then, he also talked about reevaluating all values and reconstructing all experiences, including the religious, and slowly it was dawning upon me that I was sitting at the feet of a teacher, who tore down veils from off his students' eyes, made them more keenly aware of greater truths, and with outstretched arms pointed to yet unexplored lands of the spirit.

I profited much from his creative teaching, but, I believe, I received more through my personal contacts with him. During my second year in the seminary I was his part-time secretary. I used to go to his apartment and transcribe letters, articles and talks from a dictaphone. It was an education in itself. During those visits to his home I came to know Dr. Coe, to my great delight, not only as the professor, the thinker, the philosopher, the scholar that we all knew he was, but also as the Christian and the friend.

I discovered his refined sense of humor as on occasions I had the privilege of breaking bread with him at his table. During those informal moments I heard him talk of Mrs. Coe with reverent affection. I listened to him tell about his summer camps, his boat, children, photography, music, art, the theater.

His brilliant letters fascinated me. They were letters to friends, students, relatives, leaders of all types. They invariably carried a message. In one of his letters he protested most dignifiedly against the popular notion on Morningside Heights that John Dewey was the only one who had introduced democracy in education, the social emphasis in education, the concept of education as life, and the reconstruction of experience. Dr. Coe simply referred to his own writings and claimed that independently he had arrived at the same conclusions.

To some one criticizing him for remaining within such a reactionary organization as the Christian church, he wrote back: "I am in the church because I am convinced that it is the one and only institution which has as its aim the establishment of God's Kingdom upon earth, and which works for its realization. If tomorrow I become convinced that, for instance, a labor union would do this better than the church, I would not hesitate to join it."

Unfailingly in his letters as in his lectures he would dwell on the idea of Christian growth. With prophetic vision and words he would hurl the challenge: "Help the children to grow up as Christians; make conversions unnecessary."

From his correspondence I learned of his religious tolerance and of his friendships with people of other faiths. In his letters to friends and relatives I found an affection and tenderness one would hardly suspect in Dr. Coe, the scholar. He was devoted to the Religious Education Association and to his fellow-pioneers who had started it. He was the friend of all those who, along with Jesus would take a child and set him in the midst.

He kept in touch through correspondence with his former students in other countries. He frequently told them of his cherished plan to go upon his retirement, on a trip around the world, and visit them. I know how much he counted on that trip, and I am sure that he must have felt extremely disappointed when his resignation from Union Seminary compelled him to modify his plans and exclude such a visit to former students.

He hated complacency and hypocrisy. On one occasion he said to a small group of us: "You sing 'Abide with me' or 'Come not to sojourn, but abide with me,' but frankly speaking, which one of you would care to have Jesus as an ever-present companion? Would you really like to have him in your picnics and parties and other social functions?" On another occasion, when we were discussing in rather sentimental terms the famine then raging in China, he snapped back at us: "Gentlemen, the question of a new necktie is far more important to you than the life of a Chinese."

As I was typing his letters I felt the throb of a life dedicated to the service of truth and freedom and justice. I sensed his hatred of arbitrary authority and dogmatism, class and race prejudice, sectarianism and denominationalism. I learned of his Christian internationalism and of his passion for peace through education and evolution. As I was getting one of his manuscripts ready for publication, I came to understand what he meant by a "super-political conscience," which he insisted only Religious Education could provide.

Both from personal contacts and from his books and lectures there came to me a deeper interpretation of prayer at its highest. Dr. Coe did not exactly quote: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." He put it differently. He would tell us that when we truly pray we call ourselves with the names

we really deserve, as for instance "God, be merciful to me, a *sinner*," or "we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like *lost sheep*." He would add that when we truly pray we do re-examine and reevaluate all our experiences and values, and fight our fiercest battles in the presence of God.

When Smyrna, my home city, in Asia Minor went up in smoke in 1922, and all my plans and dreams for my life work were tragically smashed, I went to Dr. Coe in real agony of soul. We had lunch together. He made me feel that he shared my deepest grief. Then he fastened his eyes on me and said words I shall never forget: "There is no need for anxiety nor despair. Continue out-fitting yourself in the best way you can, and the Power of Love above us will use you. But remember, this Power does not work with everybody and for everything, but only with those who work together with Him for good."

My last visit with him was at a hospital in New Haven, Conn. The world was in the throes of the Second World War. We talked about days at Union Seminary, but inevitably we drifted into the discussion of the current world conflict. I marvelled at the keenness of his mind and at his incisive analysis of our social evils. "No peace can come out of this war," he said. "The foundations of our social order are corrupt. We need a social reconstruction. Only as it comes will we get peace."

When a couple of years ago his presence and advice at a youth conference were sought and granted, he wrote me: "What do these young people want from an old man fast approaching ninety?" I know why. He had kept himself young and active by contributing to the building of God's beloved society. He did this to the end of his days. And I believe I can hear him repeat in justification of it a favorite verse of his: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

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## XIV

### AS REMEMBERED BY A STUDENT

My relations with George Albert Coe were so personal that I cannot hope for any great degree of objectivity in writing of his powers as a teacher. I shall merely let some of my vivid memories speak for themselves.

I was inclined to fear the wiry little man that first day at Teachers College as he worked at his desk. I sat within a few feet of him, but he didn't even nod in my direction until he was ready. Then, with a sweep of his arm indicating a chair, he welcomed me and admitted me into the most rewarding of fellowships. He asked no questions that might suggest suspicion of my preparation for graduate work. He spoke as though I had already been initiated into the fellowship of scholars. I left that first interview, as I am sure other students did similar ones, with a new and pleasing sense of maturity. He bestowed a sense of worth upon one as naturally as he breathed. He had a redemptive gift. Being so endowed he could hardly fail as a teacher.

I went to Columbia from a university in which teachers very rarely associated with students as persons, in which students scarcely ever got closer to administrators and faculty members than the Dean's secretary, and that close only when up for a reprimand. With such a background it is quite possible that I give unusual weight to the democratic spirit as a teaching asset. Yet I am sure that the unlimited generosity of Coe's spirit was as basic to his effectiveness as the proper grip on a club is to the golfer. The current interest in the "permissive" principle suggests that psychologists and educators are becoming fully aware of the importance of this basic gift for human contact that Coe possessed.

Coe had a happy way of at once probing, encouraging, and challenging a student. He rarely complimented one directly, but he nevertheless communicated his good opinion most effectively. A few days after being brought into his department as an assistant

instructor he introduced me to a distinguished visitor as "my colleague," and made every effort to include me in their discussion. I regarded this as a bit overdone, but I knew also that it richly served my particular need. At another time he presented me as "a root and branch man." His encouragement was a genuine reflection of his pride in a student in whom he found some promise. I recall times when he called his associates in his office to share his delight over something he had found in a student's examination paper. There was nothing in his appraisal of students, however, that one could call soft or unrealistic. He put faith in people, but he never took them for granted. He admired a good student, but he never left him alone—he pushed him to his maximum rate of growth. He gave recognition of merit, measured capacity, and stirred the intellect, using every possible contact to these ends. Some of my most rewarding relations with him were outside the classroom. A telephone call in the afternoon would suggest, perhaps, a walk in the park. The walk would, perhaps, include a visit to the Art Museum. There he would purposefully make his way to certain exhibits and challenge his charge to make an appraisal. Then, with kindly, humor-touched insistence, he would watch eagerly for the response. It might be that he found himself possessed of an extra ticket to a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. While waiting for the curtain and during intermissions he would converse about the vanity fair that the famous team satirized, talk about Shaw whom he loved for his brains, of Ibsen and other playwrights. But before he committed himself on a topic he would often have the student's judgment. Such occasions sent me home to read in fields I had never touched before. Sandwiched in between jokes at such times would come unexpected questions. "What did you think of Watson's remarks on the mind in this morning's Times?" He always assumed one noticed such matters. If

the answer was satisfactory he would press on. "You know what happened to the Soul when Wundt opened his laboratory?" "You mean," the student might reply, "that the soul went out because it did not lend itself to exact scientific laboratory experimentation?" He would chuckle over such a response and go on until the novice was clearly in deep water. The effect of these conversations was to greatly widen one's intellectual interests, and to alert one's mind to all that went on in the world about him. One left him with fervent hunger for ferreting out the significant in the stream of history.

Even his penetrating and delicious sense of humor did service as a teaching agent. There were times when I had to go home to do some reading to get the full impact of a joke. Many of his jokes, like his thinking generally, had to do with situations in which questions of value were central. How he delighted in the confounding of sinful human designs! After reviewing the thwarting of human greed and stupidity by powers beyond our control he would suggest that God must have a sense of humor. "He maketh to laugh in the Heavens." Even when he seemed to be indulging in common human wisecracks something of significance would emerge, like the time I took away his hat by mistake. When I put it on outside it sat on my head like a peanut shell. I went back with it and expressed my surprise at the smallness of his brain cavity. "What you have on me there," he replied, "is probably all bone." Then he told me of the good man who spent most of his scholarly days trying to convince the world that women were less intelligent than men because their brains were smaller, of how this man eventually died, and of how some satirical fellow had his brain put on the scales and found it to weigh less than the average woman's.

But George Coe could be severe. Woe to him who would break in upon him uninvited, as once I did, when he was deep in study. He could ignore one witheringly. Yet, although no one ever hit me as hard as he did, his severity never humiliated me. I never knew one who could, by his very criticism, make

me feel with elation that I was on the threshold of a new, enriching experience. After my first observation of a laboratory school in session I made a report that contained severe judgments of a teacher's neglect of a certain child who just sat vacant-eyed all day kneading a bit of plasticine. I thought I had been brilliantly observant, but my paper was returned with this written across the top, "Nothing here but a string of guesses." I marched into his office and demanded an explanation. "Are you asking me to doubt the evidence of my own eyes?" I inquired. "Certainly I am," he replied, and reached for the telephone and contacted the teacher in question. Then I learned that the child had been subjected to every known scientific treatment without success, and that she was being left alone amongst normal, working children and watched closely for some spontaneous responsiveness. What appeared to me to be neglect was in fact scientifically designed. No wonder I can recall verbatim all that passed between us at that session.

While assisting him in one of his classes in which I gave a student a failing grade he admonished me for my severity. Even after reviewing the student's paper and agreeing with me on the question of its merits he persisted in his belief that I had been too severe. I reminded him of some of the things he had done to me. "Oh that's different," he said. "I'll slap you down whenever I get the chance. You bounce." So I learned that teaching is a ministry and not just expertness in handling subject matter and rating student performance. I had many an opportunity later to observe his gentleness with those who had not yet found themselves.

Perhaps his greatest asset as a teacher is the least easily expressed. He was not just a scholar. He never allowed his scholarship to efface his personality. He was never imprisoned in his specialty. He was an advocate without dogma. While a man with the keenest objectivity of mind he was, at the same time, primarily a valuing person. Don't ask me how this conjunction of scientific and ethical spirits came about. I only know that this miracle happened in him, and that each spirit was all the better for the presence of

the other. Probably Kilpatrick could analyze this complexity of Coe's genius. He was an advocate of dynamic, freeing attitudes and principles, of revaluation and creation which enabled the student to hit back at his master. He was not a salesman for his own ideas although those ideas did more for American religious educators than the ideas of any other thinker. I know this to be true because I was for a time inclined, like so many, to think his thoughts after him, to set him up as the norm of wisdom, until he pointedly expressed his scorn for discipleship. He could drive a student into accepting himself for what he was and making the best of it. I owed to him entirely that first consciousness of having a mind of my own. Whenever I saw him in transports of delight I could guess that some student had with some success crossed swords with him or at least anticipated the truth he saw before he expressed it.

In the classroom George A. Coe's insights smote one and inflamed the spirit of effort. He would work such insights over and over, as one followed him from class to class, on different levels of difficulty and in varied settings. Every such insight was an invitation to work. One worked for Coe as one responds to an invitation to adventure. He

could do more with the mere suggestion of an interesting area to be explored than most teachers can with a year's specific assignments.

I do not know how it has been with others after they left school, but he never let go of me. Nothing I ever got into print ever escaped him, and he wrote little that I did not know of before it appeared. I have been in touch with him throughout all the years since his retirement. We argued many a question by mail. There was one problem on which we never got together. Not long ago he thanked me for honoring him in his later days with my opposition. Until then it had never occurred to me that age might affect his thinking. But he never lost his preeminence amongst us. To the day of his death he remained our great teacher. A year ago last Christmas he sent me, as he probably did others, a manuscript entitled "My Search for what is Most Worth While." (Later published, *Religious Education*, Vol. XLVI, Number 2. pp. 67-71.) That title describes him and suggests his greatest gift to the receptive student. The *better* life, the *greater* value, the *more fundamental* truth—these were his preoccupation. He was the incarnate search for "the most worth while." Could anyone escape growth at his hands?

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## XV

### AS A TEACHER

When I went to Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University for graduate study my purpose was to get as much in Religious Education as possible\* but did not expect to be able to take a doctor's degree in it. I interviewed a number of heads of departments about plans and found them about as warm and interested as icebergs. Then I went to George Albert Coe's office and was received with a warm handshake and cordial

welcome. An arrangement had just been completed between Union and Columbia by which one could major in Religious Education and I was the first to take the doctor's degree in this field with Coe under that plan.

In class Prof. Coe was never verbose, sentimental or spectacular but, as in his writings every word counted. This is, perhaps, not the sort of classroom procedure that brings tumultuous applause but it funda-



mentally affects thinking and outlook. There were two things about him which must have impressed everyone:

First, his penetrating analysis of a problem either academic or practical. He seemed to grasp, intuitively, the essential features and to penetrate to the kernel.

Second, his clear vision of the underlying significance of a situation or theory. The ordinary trained, thoughtful person would see the immediate and perhaps traditional bearing but Coe would uncover the more vital implications. This ability was, no doubt, partly owing to his fine philosophical training but it was also due to prophetic insight.

One influence of Coe as teacher was difficult for any serious student to miss—an impatience with anything that was shoddy, superficial or insincere. To him the search for facts and principles, genuine research based on the most rigid rules of scholarship was as sacred as praying and preaching. To him all truth is of God.

Coe, because of his incisive thinking and prophetic insight was always in advance even of the cutting edge in education and religion. He was in this sense a creative teacher. Perhaps he gave me more time than is customary but every conference brought constructive suggestions and a stronger impulse to carry on.

Students in his classes could scarcely fail to feel that he was in close touch with Reality but he did not overwork traditional terms. One reason for this was to get rid of hampering and confusing accretions, and no doubt accounted in part for the criticism

sometimes heard that he had no belief in God. And though he did not speak glibly about immortality yet he felt that his wife, who died young, was as real to him as when she was alive.

For Coe, religion is lived. Of course that meant a good personal life but it must also be judged by its social effects and implications. To him the "pious" person who made money or secured comforts at the expense of others or maintained possessive selfish control over others (mistakenly conceived as love) was thoroughly irreligious. Again it is easy to see how his position would be misunderstood especially by those who enjoy a good deal of emotionalism.

He had a profound faith in education and in religious education—not imposed, transmissive indoctrination but those processes which stimulate the outreach of the student and directed by sympathetic and intelligent understanding (scientific) of how persons grow and develop. He insisted that the teaching of religion called for the exercise of our highest intellectual powers and fearless research untrammelled by dogmas or apriori concepts. Religion puts no premium on ignorance or on intellectual and social opiates.

George A. Coe's hold on Reality—a Reality that is the source of all life and all truth—and his identifying himself with humanity so that he insisted on the same rights and responsibilities for others as for himself—made a lasting impression on generations of his students and on readers of his influential articles and books.

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## XVI

### AN EVALUATION

Professor Coe dedicated his *Psychology of Religion*, published in 1916, "To A Very Human Person," as follows: "To know you is to behold the splendor of life and its mystery; to know you is to discover that religious faith, if it is possible, is necessary. How can I know you and still be without religious faith? Therefore to you I dedicate this study of the human naturalness of religion."

These are sentiments which I feel toward Professor Coe himself as I sit down to write about him and his notable life-work. It was a shock to receive word that he had died November 9th, but it was comforting to know that he died peacefully in his sleep. It seemed a gracious gift of nature that he did not come to the end in acute illness and pain. His religion was so genuine and simple that the fine quality of it infused his thought and writing. Even when he took an objective and critical attitude in developing his scientific studies of religion this quality was not lost. The religious enterprise was to him the most important undertaking in life.

In the preface to the 1916 volume, on the problems, data, methods of research, and the achieved results of the new science of the psychology of religion, he began with a "frank self-revelation," and gave a list of his own attitudes concerning it. With his customary modesty he refused to appeal merely to his own experience as sufficient to settle the question. Avoiding such dogmatism he nevertheless had the spirit to avow the Christian faith as his own, and to assert his devotion to it within a church to help that faith prevail. He suggested that any reader who might think his being religious had warped his psychology should point out how it had done so and offer correction for such oned-sidedness.

Traditional mysticism did not appeal to him. He was as far from that as he was from dogmatism. In reference to belief in a

personal God, and in life after death, he said he was "unwilling to curb his heart so long as the desires of his heart were truly social." To avoid dogmatism in science as well as in religion, he thought it well to cultivate a sense of humor which he himself did very successfully and appropriately.

At the beginning of this twentieth century, Professor Coe's views of the conceptions of religion that would be in keeping with the new day dawning, were stated in the preface to his volume, *The Religion of a Mature Mind*. Two things he stressed. One was that the scientific method should be employed in the study of religion, and that the theory of evolution should be applied to the whole of man's nature. The reconstruction which he saw under way involved three great changes. "First, the Christian life is being simplified; second, its ideals are being socialized; third, its motives are being intensified." "The simplification may be seen in the substitution of a simple for a complex creed, in the abandonment of a scheme of rules in favor of a simple principle or motive, and the increasing emphasis upon love as the supreme quality. Finally, the likeness to Jesus irrespective of dogmatic affinities, as the adequate and only real test of Christian discipleship."

Professor Coe's methods of inducing active participation in his thought are among his most significant contributions to religious education. He was deeply concerned that students should take initiative and put forth their best efforts in cooperative inquiry with the leader and the group. To make certain that a student had clear ideas about what he had read or reported, Professor Coe would quiz him relentlessly, sometimes to the point of irritation, but in the long run the results were appreciated on both sides of the desk. In all the tributes to his genius as a teacher there is this common note expressed on the occasion of his retirement from Teachers

College at Columbia: "He combines what is most rare and most needed in a teacher, the most rigid criticism and the power to stimulate better work in his students." It was also noted that this thoroughness, even severity at times, often led to warm and creative friendships, and to continuous growth both for teacher and taught. "How glad I am that I chose the academic profession! It has kept me in touch with young life, and this has helped prevent my spirit from growing old as fast as otherwise it might have done."

My Christmas Greetings from Professor Coe in 1950 came with his paper, *My Search For What Is Most Worthwhile*. Immediately I wrote to him asking permission to print the paper in *The Scroll*, a little monthly magazine. He quickly complied with my request, and the article appeared in the issue of December, 1950. I was happy to see it gain a wider reading through the March-April, 1951, issue of *Religious Education*. Coming so near the end of his long life, the article summarizes dramatically the central interest of his notable professional career, which was the study of values and the methods of achieving them. This led him to careful and extensive inquiry into the problems of personality, the manner of its becoming, in

the individual and the group, the identity of the ethical and religious ideals in the processes of social growth.

Professor Coe was deeply concerned to see initiative in individuals in relation to their organism and to their interaction with their social environment. Situations occur in which the individual "faces round" and "confronts" society, or nature, or the totality of being, which we call the universe. This "facing round" is illustrated in the questions of scientists, philosophers, social reformers, rebels, and many discontented with the social order which may have imprisoned, or sought to suppress them, without really understanding them. Sometimes these questioners have led to discoveries and to paths of progress!

There are further problems raised in my own mind by the stimulating inquiries of our friend and leader, and this is as he himself would have it. His desire was always to quicken and enlarge our minds. I can think of nothing that would have pleased him better than to believe that his final message would be a living inspiration to all who knew and loved him, to continue and clarify the great ethical and religious *Search* in which his own life was spent.

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## XVII

### AN APPRECIATION

George Albert Coe was not only professor of religious education at Teachers College, he represented religious education on the campus even though he was not official chaplain either at Columbia or at Teachers College. Everyone knew that progressive education had in him a staunch champion, but everyone also knew that religious education had in him a devoted soul whose religion was not, to use the Hebrew phrase, "from the lips without."

During my studies at Teachers College (1918-1922) I did not have the good fortune to know Professor Coe as a teacher. However, my contacts with him through the Religious Education Association and the religious activities at Teachers College and on the Columbia campus in general gave me a most clear indication of his personality. As president of the Jewish Forum at Teachers College it was my privilege to represent the Jewish group either in religious activities at

Teachers College itself or on various occasions on the Columbia campus. No one was second to Dr. Coe in willingness to render service to religious groups and causes. He was always a severe taskmaster with himself and made powerful demands on his own time and strength.

In the latter part of the '20s we had a convention of the Religious Education Association in Chicago, devoted to the question of the relation of church and state in education, one of the favorite topics of Dr. Coe at that time. As Director of Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, I participated in the convention. As was often the case, he set the tone of the conference. I still remember with what clarity he presented his analysis in which he emphasized the importance of having an independent agency such as the church perform the function of exercising critical intelligence on the state—to be a sensitive moral force which could independently evaluate the activities of the state in the light of the highest demands of religion and ethics.

The concept of religion as separate from life is, as the readers of *Religious Education* know, foreign to Jewish classical thinking on the subject. Judaism is a way of life. The term "culture" which includes literature, art, music, customs, traditions, ways of acting and reacting, is closer to a description of what a Jew means as, steeped in Jewish tradition, he operates with the concept of religion. His religion in that case is not of the year-end or even of the week-end variety. Hence we have a Hebrew term for the words "faith," "law," "custom," but we have no term for the word "religion." It always appeared to me that among the non-Jews, three men came closest to appreciating our concept. These are John Dewey, William Heard Kilpatrick, and George Albert Coe. The last, because he was at work in the field of religious education, read many of the Jewish writings on the subject and therefore came close to the Jewish group at Teachers College which sought to develop a philosophy of Jewish life in America, a point of view which took cognizance on the one hand of old Jewish

traditions and on the other hand of the democratic philosophy of life.

When therefore the Jewish group at Columbia frowned on the "melting pot" theory of adjustment to America and saw in it the danger of encouraging the jingoistic super-patriots who looked on the various immigrants coming to this country as people who should quickly divest themselves of their unique characteristics and culture as unnecessary divergencies from the rest of the population, the small group of Jewish graduate students at Teachers College recognized that the various nationalities who came to this country had cultures of their own, had elements of worth to be cultivated and transmitted to the young. Such cultural or religious values, they felt, would help to enrich the life of the various minority groups which constituted our great democracy, and in that way contribute to the enhancement of American life as a whole. Hence arose the idea of cultural pluralism which held sway for some years and which only few in the general population were at that time able to understand. It was George Albert Coe who was one of those who saw the possibility inherent in this point of view. It was the recognition of this idea that helped to create a favorable atmosphere at Teachers College, which made it the center for those of varied culture groups who sought to adjust their peoples to America not by a rapid process of superficial assimilation that trampled upon their time-honored traditions and treated the immigrants as objects to be "molded" into common clay, but by bringing into an harmonious symphony the various groups and cultures, to make for a truly liberal, multi-colored civilization in America.

In these days when the totalitarianism of both the right and the left confront all Americans with dangers within and without, it is well to express our gratitude for the genuine liberalism and the true religious spirit of understanding which animated George Albert Coe. The memory of the righteous is a blessing!

EMANUEL GAMORAN

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## XVIII

### FOR FORTY YEARS

About forty years ago I first met George Albert Coe at a Religious Education Club meeting at the University of Chicago. For three hours I was spell-bound by his far reaching logic and obvious sincerity. I could not on that evening have explained either the process of his reasoning, or why I was attracted to him. He has helped to make religious education the central, dominating interest of my life from that night to the present day. I had already decided to follow the relatively new vocation. Dr. Coe helped me to see how inclusive the margins of my prospective profession would be. He and his philosophy and books have been central in my thinking in religious education these forty years. It has not been my privilege to have an intimate friendship with him but rather a communion of spirit, through his books, occasional letters and meetings in conventions. Dr. Coe was present at many Religious Education Conventions and was always a pervading spirit. He seemed to some of the younger group in those days a lover of argument for its own sake, but the writer came to see through the years the dominating passion of Dr. Coe's life and the almost pitiless drive of his search for the whole truth in a time of continuous change.

I was active in the teaching field in Religious Education between 1909 and 1946 and in this period all of Dr. Coe's books as published were used in reference and study. In 1916 we adopted Dr. Coe's newly issued *Social Theory of Religious Education* as a syllabus guide, and each one sought to find for himself through cooperative thinking a philosophy of Christian education. As the instructor, I planned to take to Dr. Coe at a convention the eager, insistent questions of the students. I have never forgotten Dr. Coe's reaction. "Come to my hotel room at ten tonight." When the young instructor arrived he found seven or eight more mature teachers who entered into cooperative think-

ing with Dr. Coe. It was toward two in the morning when we departed! His treatment of those questions has never been forgotten by this then young instructor. How great was the admiration of the members of that class when they learned of his eager, sympathetic treatment of their early thought processes.

About ten years ago I was asked by a retired Christian worker of national reputation for counsel relative to a finished religious manuscript which he wished to publish. In the heart of that manuscript was a chapter of far reaching revolutionary proposal. The matter seemed to me to be of such importance that I invited a dozen Southern California scholars to luncheon and an afternoon of conference based upon the manuscript. Dr. Coe was invited. His interest was marked. He doubted his ability to come, but would I send him the manuscript which would have his careful attention? His letter, carefully considered in his absence, was an outstanding contribution of the afternoon. He advised the publication of the revolutionary chapter!

Ten or twelve years ago Dr. Coe was reading a paper before the Association of Teachers of Religion in Southern California Colleges. The scope of membership in the group had been widened recently to include other than Protestants. Dr. Coe in his paper was very critical of authority centered in institutions, and was moving toward an authority within the individual based upon honest, ceaseless, unhampered search for truth. In the midst of the reading a member of the group protested and requested that the statement be withdrawn. For about fifteen minutes the two men stood in the center of the group, the one with his raincoat over his arm and hat in hand, the other with his manuscript in one hand and his hearing aid in the other. With undeviating logic Dr. Coe moved to clarify his position and to get the dissenting scholar to recognize the va-

lidity of the point of view enunciated. Those present will not forget Dr. Coe's supreme efforts to get a fellow searcher for truth to accept a common method. A right method was regarded as essential by Dr. Coe.

Dr. Coe's last book which was published in 1943 came to me with poignant force and challenged me to an intensified effort in using the method of thinking which he had commended to me. Dr. Coe had restudied the writings of his life time and had found that objective factual truths were largely correct but that value judgments were subject to restatement in the light of an ever-changing social consciousness. He would in his "last" book rectify his inadequate judgments. Fresh data compels revision. His own Christian conscience compelled him to dissent with himself! This is incarnate honesty.

It is not my purpose even to refer to the corrected conclusions of, *What is Religion Doing to Our Consciences?* Many of us have disagreed with particular conclusions of Dr. Coe. The great fact to keep in mind about this man was his method of thought. In an eternity of change he found no finality in conclusion. A person of utter sincerity is driven as long as he lives to a continuous open minded revision of his thought processes. This process must be carried on in a universal atmosphere of changing psychological, philosophical procedures, and the whole process being carried on amid far-reaching social changes.

Dr. Coe's writings drove me to more honest, more thorough recognition of all the factors of wider and wider circles of my fellow-

men. Dogmatism became less significant as open minded search for truth in a changing world became a dominant pattern. There cannot be sympathy with any easygoing compromise. With Dr. Coe there was no quarter in the thought world when differences developed. Yet this endless search for truth is tireless and ideally, should be activated by Christian love and good will. Ambiguity in thought, including one's own, must be dissolved, no matter whose pet belief is disturbed.

Dr. Coe was not critical of the old thought alone, he was equally critical of the new. Ambiguity in thinking had no place in his thought process, and he pleaded for a similar approach to truth by everyone. For me, Dr. Coe was the arch enemy of ambiguity. If we all were equally clear in our thinking, valid universal solutions would arrive more quickly. Cooperative thinking is valuable in exposing shallowness and error.

A year ago at Christmas time, I was a recipient of the typed essay from Dr. Coe, along with many of you. I had read and re-read these "last" words and had prepared for a call on Dr. Coe at Claremont. I always "prepared" myself to talk with Dr. Coe. A note from me to him indicated my appreciation and obligation, and my desire to talk with him. Last summer I made my pilgrimage to Claremont, but it was too late. He could not receive visitors. Dr. Coe's challenge to honest critical thinking has been with me since young manhood and I am grateful for the demands he has made upon me for over forty years.

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 Whittier College,  
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## XIX

### AS I KNEW HIM

When I retired from teaching in Grinnell College and came to Pilgrim Place sick in body and confused in mind, fearing the loss of my eyesight, I met Dr. George Coe who greeted me enthusiastically as if he had known me for many years. There was healing in his generous welcome.

He had chosen Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California, in 1931, enchanted by its location at the foot of snow-covered mountains, its winding streets disclosing new vistas at every turn. The human element added to his delight, for here he found missionaries from many lands bringing with them a world outlook and intimate knowledge of many races and cultures. He found, too, men and women who had given devoted service in the United States.

In the hall where we took our noon meal each day, I was seated by Dr. Coe's side and discovered him as a stimulating conversationalist who larded his serious appraisal of events and people with laughter provoking stories. He seemed to have an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes which were told, not only to amuse, but to illumine his weightier comments which included religious, literary, social and economic questions. For me and those who sat near him, it was a feast of reason seasoned with releasing laughter.

There were occasions when we disagreed sharply. After reading Gerald Heard's new book *The Gospel According to Gamaliel*, I ran excitedly across the street to his home but as soon as he opened the door and I told him the name of the author, his smile vanished. He slammed the door shut leaving the book in my hand. The divergence in our views extended to Browning's poetry, to Schweitzer's doctrine of "Reverence for Life."

He was more generous in the giving of his means than in yielding one iota of his convictions. Here his convertible car took the place of his yacht in New York. I knew of his seamanship and how he shared its delights with his students and friends as he sailed

around Manhattan, to Long Island and to the open sea. In Pilgrim Place his car was rarely seen without other occupants. He had explored the mountain roads in all directions and he was eager to show the views to others. There were moments when up on a dizzy height I wished I were on safer ground. With his impaired hearing and sight one could not feel he was keen enough for such dangerous adventures. Every summer he drove to Evanston, a long and tedious journey, and I was always relieved when I received his letter announcing his safe arrival and his joy at being with his old friends who were as dear to him as if they were his kin. From Evanston he drove on to Canada and to the camp by the lake where he sailed his boat. His letters from there were full of interesting details about the McEwens, the Wards and the native helpers and his luck or lack of it in fishing. Twice his very dear friend, Dr. Mary McEwen, then a widow, paid long visits here and he greatly enjoyed her companionship and introducing her to the residents of Pilgrim Place who became fond of her. When one autumn the news came she could not come because of serious illness and an incurable trouble there was universal grief. To Dr. Coe it was a blow from which he never recovered. When two years later his doctor did not hide from him that he had cancer, he announced it to all his friends as if it were good news he wanted to spread. When we endeavored to reassure him he might under treatment be spared some years his reply was, "No, I do not want to live, the sooner I die the better." He was not suffering then and that summer he returned to Evanston, not in his car, but by train, and from there went to his beloved cottage in Canada. He enjoyed the summer. Dr. Ernest McEwen, Dr. Mary's son, had devotedly lifted him into his boat and sailed him about the lake that he might have a last look upon his domains.

In September on his return to us he was



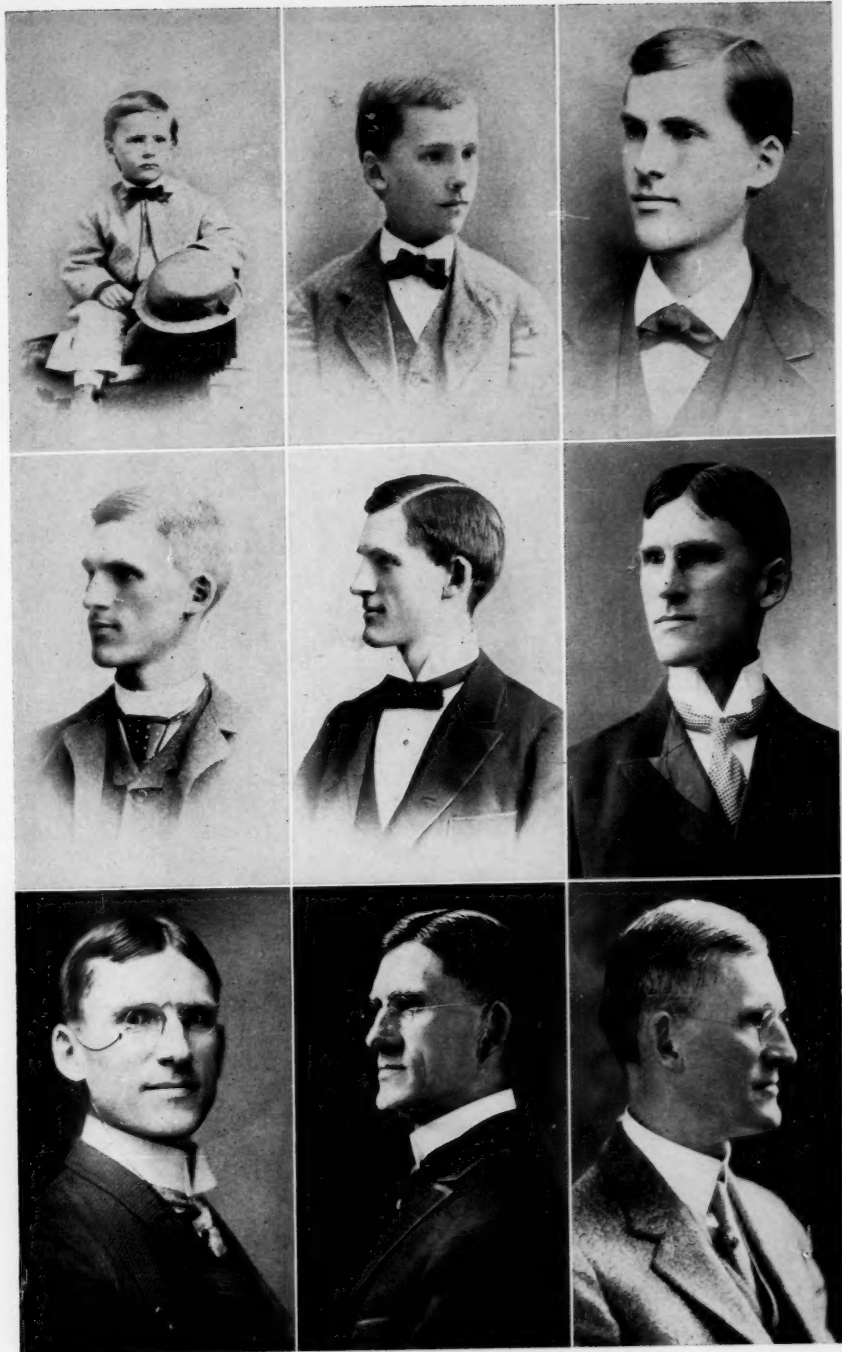
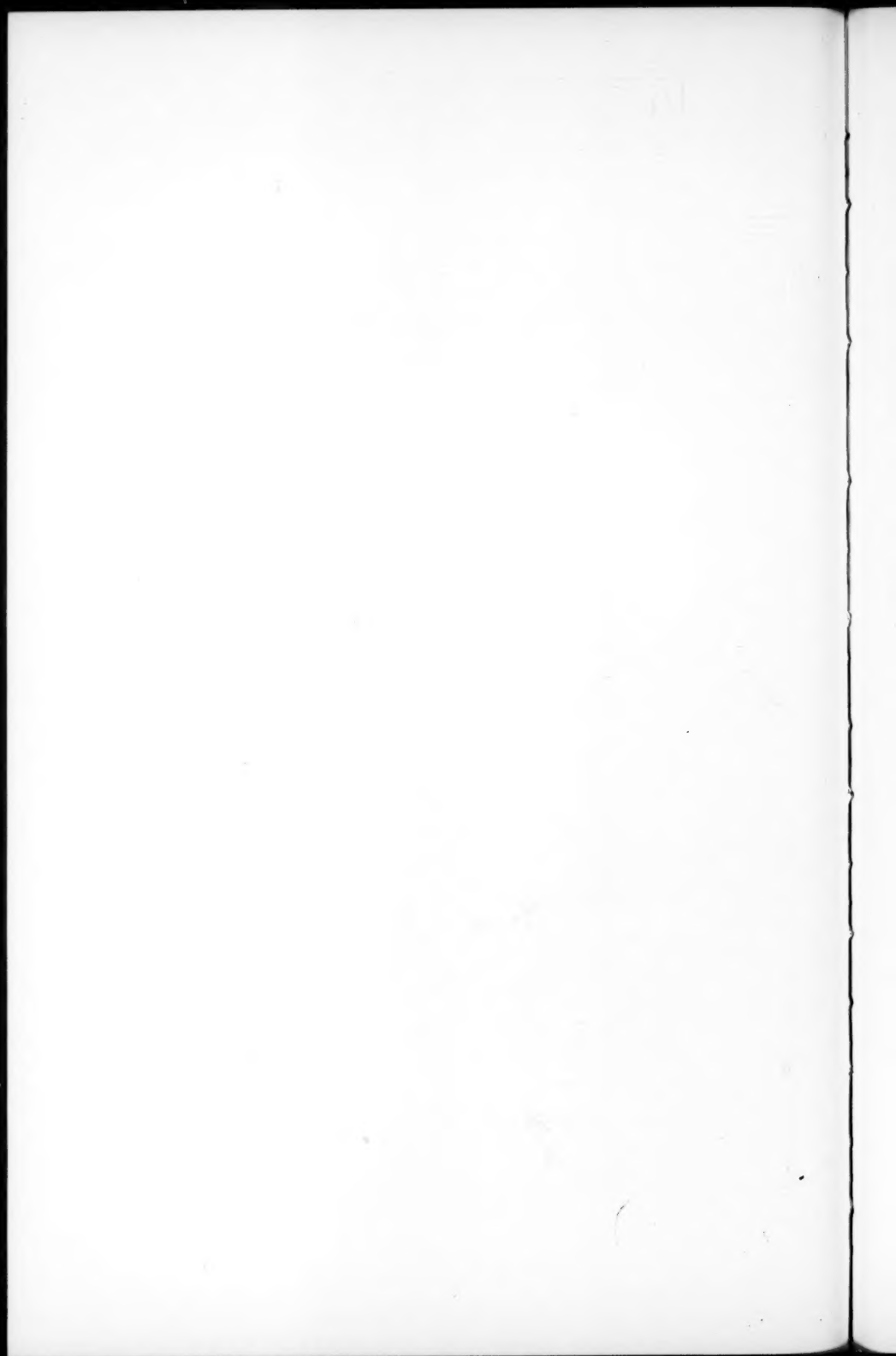


PHOTO-BIOGRAPHY  
GEORGE ALBERT COE



cheerful. Unwisely, we all thought, he had dismissed his housekeeper and moved into a smaller apartment newly built on his own design, and suited to his needs. He wanted to be alone but soon it became necessary for him to have a nurse. Dr. Lester Beals, a retired medical missionary, and a gracious good neighbor offered to act as his secretary, and was a great comfort to him in the months of lingering illness which followed. Gradually all visitors were excluded and even his best friends and nearest neighbors saw him seldom and only very briefly. The last time I saw him I found him one evening seated upon his porch and I had the courage to speak to him. He lifted his hands in protest saying in a halting voice, "I can't see you, I can't speak." Tenderly I put my arm around his shoulder and said a few endearing words and left him. Three days later when his passing was announced at our dining hall, there was profound silence in expression of our grief at his loss and our gratitude that his suffering was over.

At Dr. Coe's request there was no funeral service. He felt that often services were inappropriate and overdone and he wished no eulogies. His friend Dr. Luther Freeman who knew him as a fellow student felt that it would be a happy thing if we who loved him could get together and in an informal way reminisce about him. The large parlor in Abernethy Hall with chairs arranged in circular fashion was filled long before the announced hour—not only with Pilgrim Place residents but with friends who came from Claremont, Los Angeles, Whittier and other places. A number of his former students who were present recalled the great pioneer work he did in Religious Education and its effect on Sunday School instruction. Others

stressed his generosity in using his gift of dramatic reading. He read each week for many years to a Pilgrim group who never wanted to miss the privilege of hearing him. Sometimes he read from the "Best Plays of the Year" and so effectively that one could visualize the stage setting and the characters portrayed. Once when I congratulated him and told him he had missed his calling, he said "No" but that he should have liked to have written a drama. In his readings he often chose selections from the poets and even when he read psychology he did it so rhythmically, it sounded like poetry.

I shared with the group my feeling about him as a friend and comrade and spoke of his devotion to Pilgrim Place to which he gave freely of his means. At this gathering there were both laughter and tears and no praise that our friend did not truly deserve.

Even as I write these pages, I can feel his presence. When I pass the still empty house called by him "Sunset" and re-baptized "Sunrise," I can see him not as I saw him last, but as I saw him day after day through six short years. He was a great and humble man wise with the wisdom of the ages, devout with the faith of a true Christian. Once when we talked about the life after death, he said that he was not certain about its existence or what it is, but he did not want to be an angel and with the angels stand but hoped he would hear the angels sing the Hallelujah chorus. He added with a smile, "I'd stand up and join in the singing."

Four days after his death, Dr. Mary, his beloved friend, was released from her living death and entered the Life Eternal. One cannot refrain from wishing that they have met and that the riddle of the meaning of life which they often discussed is solved.

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## XX

### MY LAST VISIT WITH GEORGE A. COE

A notice in a daily paper of the death of George A. Coe brought back vividly to my mind a visit I had had with him last summer. He was one whom I honored greatly. He had been my major professor at Union Seminary a long time ago, I, having gone there as a student the very year he was called to the professorship of Religious Education, at Union. I wrote the following memorandum after seeing him.

In Pilgrim's Place, Claremont, California, I called upon George A. Coe, July 31, 1951. He was, they said, very weak and would probably not live very long. I went to his cottage and the nurse admitted me. He was lying on a couch fully dressed, having but a little before been taken to the barber. He was thin and shrunken—and seemed very small indeed compared with the man I remembered.

He was glad to see me. "You have made me very happy by coming, Braden," he said. Then he looked at me squarely, and said, "You know I am nearing death. I shall not live much longer," and he added with almost a twinkle in his eye, "I welcome it. I have long wanted to die."

"I can understand that," I said. "If anyone ever had a right to wish for release certainly you have earned it. You have lived long and richly and you have made a great contribution to the world. If now your physical strength no longer permits you to do creative work, I see no reason why you might not wish to die."

"Oh, then you approve!" he cried, and now there was animation in his voice and his eyes sparkled. "So many don't." "You know,"

he said, "I have long thought of it. I once wrote an article on my view," and he sought vainly to recall just where it had been published. He even called for a typed list of his books and articles—not at all complete, for I remembered at least three books that were not included. But he couldn't find it even there. "It was," he said, "a chapter he contributed to some book edited by another."

He had even, he said, contemplated taking his own life, and could logically justify it, but he had not gone to that length. He was proudly a member of the Euthanasia Society of America, and believed that under proper controls the practice of Euthanasia might well be approved.

We talked of many things. He spoke of certain ideas which he had written and a friend of his was going to publish eventually. Knowing my interest in comparative religion, he said the thing that impressed him as most significant in Christianity was the concept of our being workers with God—i.e., that God was one who worked and who honored the *worker*.

I was with him perhaps twenty minutes. He suffered no pain, but weariness. When I asked if my presence was tiring him he replied that it might increase his weariness, but it also greatly increased his happiness.

I left him with a firm handclasp, a smile, and the certainty that I should not see him again. And he lay back to wait, not with fear, but with lively anticipation, the crisis of death which so many approach with fear and foreboding, but for him would mean a glad release. It was a benediction to me to have made the visit.

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## PUBLICATIONS OF GEORGE A. COE

IN LISTING THE following books and articles, furnished by Dr. Coe, it may be well to direct attention to a few of the more significant contributions he has made to religious education. One needs to read the titles and dates of only his books to realize that he has been not only a pioneer but a prophet. To the work of education in religion he has brought certain fundamental points of view and methods on which all who ever work with children must build. He has, for example, rescued religion from the subjective theorizing of dogma, on the one hand, and from hasty formulations of social psychologists on the other, so that it is possible to think objectively concerning its manifestations without finding oneself lost in an undiscriminated maze of social responses. Religion to Dr. Coe is a distinguishable type of life adjustment, natural to man, in which he persists in remaking both himself and his world. To note the specific situations and processes in which this religious mode of adjustment is taking place has been one of his chief contributions to thought and education and has opened the way to careful scientific research.

Besides providing religious education with a basic and usable religious psychology or psychological point of view Dr. Coe has made significant contributions to the psychology of moral growth. His insistence on the self as a concept not only germane to psychology but central in any analysis of phenomena which does justice to the facts of experience has had its ups and downs and seems again to be coming into prominence. Moral education to Dr. Coe is not the fitting together of the parts of a machine nor the conditioning of a set of primitive animal responses to more acceptable patterns. It is the growth of a self, exercising increasingly self criticism and self direction. To attempt to cultivate a series of virtues, apart from any consideration of the particular social problems an individual must face and solve in the light of a

comprehensive social principle, is to substitute a marionette play for the episodes of reality. Virtues do not make character, but virtue does. Traits in themselves have neither ethical nor concrete significance. Morality is *participation* in the functions of an ethical social order.

In the third place, Dr. Coe has made explicit the social implications of his analysis of the way men grow. A tawdry spiritual environment will not generally produce a beautiful character. His insistence on the reform of parents, teachers, preachers, and men of affairs, the transformation of institutions, the reconstruction of customs, the elimination of cant, the abnegation of arbitrary authority, the worth of the individual, and the supremacy of understanding love has brought to our generation a cogent illustration of the alliance between religion, in its most rigorous and uncompromising demands on men, and education, in its revelation of men's capacity and its provision of the means for personal-social self-realization. For Dr. Coe religion and education are united in a common purpose and a common method.

Finally Dr. Coe, more than any other contemporary man, has made us think in terms of specific purposes. He has small quarrel with educational thinking save at this point that it is not sufficiently interested in the *products* of education. What is the aim of the school? No trite or vague answer will suffice to inform us as to the value of our school methods. With regard to every curriculum, every course, every project, every session it is essential to ask, what is its object? In terms of skills? Yes. In terms of information? To be sure, but primarily in terms of the total social and personal results today and twenty years, twenty generations, from today. The perpetuation of decadent customs and demoralizing conditions in industry and government, in relations between the sexes, in the use of leisure, in the conduct of international affairs, in the care of of-



fenders, are directly traceable to educational processes which have not been criticized in regard to their essential outcomes. Dr. Coe's philosophy of education gives large place to these outcomes and to the reconstruction of method which must take place in all our education, whether religious or secular, if the

Kingdom of God is to make progress on the earth.

These and many other things are discussed in the following books, articles, and critical reviews which are listed in *chronological order*.

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# Selections from George Albert Coe's Writings

*In a magazine devoted to George A. Coe, it is appropriate to have him "speak for himself." These ten articles are selected from the many which he wrote and are reprinted here as illustrations of the range and the cogency of Dr. Coe's thinking over a half century. We regret that limitations of space prevent the inclusion of many of his more important contributions.*

*The articles are arranged according to the years of publication.*

*—The Editorial Committee*

## I

### 1903 - RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AS A PART OF GENERAL EDUCATION

*Proceedings of the Religious Education Association, 1903*

THE MODERN conception of religious education takes the form of an argument. True education, it says, must develop all the normal capacities of the mind; religion is one of these normal capacities; therefore true education includes education in religion. If, for any reason, the state does not impart religious training, then the home and the church must assume the whole task. This task is no mere appendix to general education, but an essential part thereof. It is not a special or professional matter which, like training in the fine arts, may be left to individual taste or ambition. Religious education must be provided for all children, and institutions that provide it for any children are organs of the general educational system.

This view is modern in the sense that a new awakening to it is upon us; it is modern in the sense that the exclusion of religious instruction from the public schools has given it peculiar emphasis and peculiar form; yet, in one form or another, it is as old as civilization. The theory that there can be any education that does not include religion; the theory that looks upon our so-called secular schools as a scheme of general education, leaving religious training as a mere side issue, is so new as to be almost bizarre. If, therefore, any new idea is before us for our judgment, the question should be formu-

lated as follows: What shall we think of the strange notion that men can be truly educated without reference to the development of their religious nature?

It is well, however, to think through the old idea in order to see whether it is, in any full sense, a modern idea also. In the present state of educational philosophy and of religious thought, can we make good the assertion that sound general education must include religion? If so, what shall we think of the education, commonly called general, that leaves religion out? What follows, also, with respect to the present relative isolation of religious education from our school system and our school methods?

The central fact of the modern educational movement is recognition of the child as a determining factor in the whole educational scheme. The child is a living organism, a being that grows from within by assimilation, not from without by accretion. Therefore the laws of the child-mind yield laws for educating the child, laws as to method, and laws as to material. Education is not to press the child into any pre-arranged mold, but to bring out his normal powers in their own natural order.

Religious education has commonly proceeded from the opposite point of view, namely, from a fixed system of religion to

which the child is to be shaped. If, then, religion is to find any place in a general scheme of education under modern conditions, some kind of settlement must be effected between these opposing points of view. If we start from the modern philosophy of education, our question is this: Is the human being essentially religious, or only adventitiously so? Does religious nurture develop something already there in the child, or does it merely attach religion to the child, or the child to religion? On the other hand, if we start from the standpoint of religion, our question is: Does not all education aim to fit the child for some goal or destiny; and, if so, how does religious education differ from any other except through its definition of the goal?

That the child has a religious nature can be asserted with a degree of scientific positiveness that was never possible before the present day. First, every theory that makes religion a mere by-product of history has been almost universally abandoned. Religion has come up out of the mind of man as a natural response to universal experience. There is debate as to the content, the utility, and the significance of this response, but none as to its naturalness. The psychology of the day finds that religion is as deeply rooted in human nature as any of the higher instincts or impulses that distinguish man from lower orders of life.

The idea that religion belongs to man as such has been reinforced in recent years by accumulating evidence that the development of the human individual runs parallel, in a general way, to the evolution of man. The individual is said to recapitulate the history of his race.\* It follows that the mighty power and pervasiveness of religion in general history are to be looked for in miniature in child-life.

Observation confirms this presumption. The kindergarten, the highest outward expression of our knowledge of child-nature, is squarely built upon the religiousness of the child. Fröbel's whole plan of education re-

volved around the thought that God is a present reality within us and within nature about us, and that the end of education is to make us conscious of his presence. This was a philosophical idea, of course, but to Fröbel's eye, and according to the experience of kindergartners, the child freely, joyously responds to it.

The same observation has been made within the home circle. What is that wondrous reverence and sense of dependence with which little children look up to their parents, sometimes actually believing that the father is God, but the first stage of the feeling of absolute dependence which Schleiermacher declared to be the essence of religion? The appetite of children for fairy-tales, wonder-stories, and heroic legends reveals the very same impulse that once peopled the woodlands, the mountains, and the sea with supernatural beings, heard in the thunder the voice of the storm-god, beheld in the rising sun the very face of divinity, and traced our human pedigree back to the demigods.

The evidence becomes piercingly luminous in the period of adolescence, when childhood culminates and pauses before settling into the fixed forms of manhood. Adolescence reveals in the blossom the seeds that were germinating through infancy and childhood. What distinctly human quality—one not shared with the brutes—is more characteristic of adolescence than susceptibility to the ideal longings that culminate in religion? Interfused with hero-worship, the romanticism, the truth—and beauty—seeking, the self-consciousness of youth, is a reaching out after something more satisfying than all that our eyes see and our hands handle.

The philosophy of religion goes one step farther, and declares that analysis of human consciousness in its three phases—the true, the good, and the beautiful—reveals the idea of God as implicit in the whole of our conscious life.

Here religious education takes its stand. It declares, with all the authority of the history of the race, with all the authority of sound observation and analysis, that religion is an essential factor of the human personality, and that, therefore, a place must be found for

\*Coe soon abandoned the theory of recapitulation, commonly held at this time.—*Editor.*

religious education within general education.

We reach this conclusion from the pedagogical point of view. But there is also a religious point of view. The pedagogue says: "Bring out what is already in the child." Religion says: "Bring the child into obedience to the will of God." Apparently education is guided by what the child already is, whereas religion prescribes what he must become. Can we unite these two points of view?

The case is not different for religious education from what it is for education universally. The reason why schools exist at all is three fold: because children cannot remain children; because what happens to them during childhood affects their maturity for good or ill; and because adults know which is the better life and can help children to attain it. What adults know of the good life does and must preside over all education whatsoever. The material put before the child is always selected, and it should be adapted not only to the child's spontaneous interests, but also to producing the kind of man we wish him to be.

At this point the educational reform has been somewhat halting. Is the end of education knowledge, or culture, or power? Is it intellectual or ethical? Is it individual or social? Just at present there is a flood-tide of sentiment that asserts that the end is neither knowledge, nor culture, nor power as such, nor anything else that is merely individual, but rather social adjustment and efficiency. This is a favorable moment for religion to lift up her voice and proclaim that within her hand is the final meaning of life, and that to her belongs, not only a place, but the supreme place, in determining the end of education.

The point of view of the-child-that-is and the point of view of the-man-he-should-be become reconciled through the insight that the later self is pre-formed in the earlier. It is possible to make education ethical because the child's nature is ethical; social because it is social. The ethical authority to which the child is taught to bow is already within the child himself. It is the same with religious education; it is the same with specifically Christian education. God has made us in

his own image and likeness; he has formed us for himself, and there is a sense in which, as one of the Fathers said, the soul is naturally Christian.

At this point religious thought transfigures the whole idea of education. The chief factor in the process is no longer the text-book; it is no longer the teacher; it is God who pre-forms the child for himself, plants within him the religious impulse, and grants to parents and teachers the privilege of cooperating to bring the child to a divine destiny. The time is not far behind us when men failed to connect the thought of childhood or the thought of education with the thought of God. They put education and religion in sharp antithesis, making one a human process, the other divine. Even today there is distrust of religious education lest it shall leave conversion and religious experience out of the account. But in reality infancy, childhood, and adolescence are themselves a divinely appointed school of personal religion, a school in which the divine Spirit is prime mover and chief factor. Religion does not flow from the teacher to the child; it is not given, or communicated, or impressed, merely from without; it is a vital impulse, and its source is the source of all light and life. In the normal unfolding of a child's soul we behold the work of the Logos who gives himself to every man coming into the world. When the Logos comes to a child, he comes to his own, and it is in the profoundest sense natural that the child should increasingly receive him as the powers of the personality enlarge.

The thought of God works a further transformation in our thought of education. For God's will compasses all the ends, his presence suffuses all the means, and his power works in all the processes of it. Accordingly, religious education is not a part of general education, it is general education. It is the whole of which our so-called secular education is only a part or a phase. Religious education alone takes account of the whole personality, of all its powers, all its duties, all its possibilities, and of the ultimate reality of the environment. The special hours, places, and material employed in religious training

do not stand for any mere department; they represent the inner meaning of education and of life in their totality.

Our practical problem, therefore, is greater than that of organizing a good Sunday school and promoting religion in the home. The spirit of religion must be infused into the whole educational organism. Religion has not separated itself from general education, but public education has separated itself from the vine of which it is a branch. Yet not wholly, for there are leaders of public instruction who see that the end of education is one with the end of life, and that, though religious instruction be excluded from the schools, the spirit of religion should pervade the whole system. The time has not come, it is not very near, when the public school can resume the work of specific religious instruction. We must first learn more of Christian union. But we are needlessly squeamish regarding the limits of the moral and spiritual functions of our school system. The system exists as an expression of the ideals of our civilization. In the most democratic state there is no reason why ideals that are common to the people should not be expressed in the people's schools, even though some citizens should disapprove. We shall never secure an ideal school system by consulting the citizen who has the fewest ideals. Why not assume that some principles of the spiritual life are already settled, and that these principles are to control our schools? Why should not moral training be made to approach nearer and nearer to the fully unified ideal that is found in our religion?

On the other hand, it behooves the home and the church, realizing that they are members of the general educational organism, to relate their work more closely to that of the public school, the high school, and the college. Religious education is not peculiar in method, but only in its aim and in the material as determined by the aim. All the results of modern progress in educational philosophy, methods, and organization be-

long to the home and the church as much as to the state schools.

Existing organs and methods of religious training—the Sunday school, the young people's society, the junior and intermediate societies, the Young Men's Christian Associations, the catechism, the lesson systems and lesson-helps—arose, for the most part, in response to special needs, and were adopted with no clear consciousness of their possible place in a general scheme of education. This is not a matter of reproach at all. On the contrary, these things have all pursued the normal course of development, which consists first of all in doing the thing that is immediately needed, the theory being left for later working out. But when the theory has been worked out, then the organ that arose in an incidental way may attain to higher usefulness through understanding of its nature, laws and relations.

This self-conscious, fully reflective step must now be taken. There is a great body of pedagogical philosophy that must be assimilated. There are principles of teaching that must be observed. There is knowledge of the child-mind that must be utilized. There are riches of knowledge in many directions that are waiting to be consecrated to Christ in the service of children and young people.

We cannot longer neglect these things and remain guiltless. The light has dawned, and we must love light rather than darkness. Both the home and the church must rise to their privilege of being parts of the general organism of education. They must realize that they are under as much obligation as the principal or the teachers in a public school to study the child, to master the material and methods of education, and to acquire skill in the educational process. Vastly more time and vastly more money must be devoted to this service, and we must never regard either home or church as normally successful until it is no longer the exception but the rule for children to "grow up Christian, and never to know themselves as being otherwise."

## II

### 1908 - THE SOURCES OF THE MYSTICAL REVELATION

*Hibbert Journal*, January, 1908

THE PRESENT revival of mysticism springs, no doubt, from needs of the human spirit that are as old as religion. But its apologetic is largely new. It is also daring, for it aims at nothing less than the incorporation of psychological supernaturalism within modern science. Of course the terminology of supernaturalism drops away, and the mystic is forward to say that his experiences fall under universal laws of mind. Nevertheless, when we reach the end of the new and supposedly scientific argument, we find that we have somehow moved from the plane of empirical observation to that of a transcendental ontology. If a physicist should assert that scientific observation reveals the ontological reality of matter, we should suspect that he had somehow mixed metaphysical speculation with his empirical generalizations. The same suspicion attaches to the supposed scientific evidence for the validity of mysticism. To many minds this one consideration is sufficient to settle the matter. But, inasmuch as the new mystical apologetic has secured lodgment among professional psychologists, it will be worth while to inquire in some detail where and how in the mystical experience the ontological certainties of mysticism arise. As a contribution toward this inquiry, I shall analyze two types of argument, the first based upon experiences of the ecstatic type, the second upon the widespread feeling of the reality of spiritual things.

I. The datum of the first argument is the generic similarity in the content of mystical experiences. From the trance practices of all religions, from the physical effects of certain drugs, particularly anaesthetics, and from the recurrent spontaneous obsession called "cosmic consciousness," to which some persons are subject, there comes a common report. It is that the limits of the individual self are transcended through some kind of

mingling in, or other immediate realisation of, a larger world of the spiritual order; that this larger reality is good, and that in it the contradictions and the mystery of existence are solved.

Alongside this common report we find, of course, other asserted intuitions which vary with the mystic's training and viewpoint. One devotee experiences union with a personal God, or with Jesus; another sinks into an impersonal deity, into nature, or into the void of mere being; one beholds definite objects and hears specific words; another reports that he has advanced beyond all definiteness into the completely ineffable. Thus each brings back confirmation of his own creed. These special features are accounted for, of course, by auto-suggestion; the entranced person merely interprets his strange experience in the thought-terms with which he is familiar. But it is said that the common content of this world-wide experience requires a different explanation. Here, it is argued, are the marks of valid perception, namely, immediacy, certainty, and the universal agreement of experts.

The formulation of this argument comes from Professor James, who has been followed by various writers. Lest I overstate James's position, however, let it be said that various lines of argumentation cross and recross in his fascinating *Varieties of Religious Experience*. He certainly intends to give standing to mystical practices because of their practical results, and at times he also claims for them the kind of immediate authority that they assert for themselves. Mystical states, he says, have noëtic quality (p. 380); consciousness of illumination is their essential mark (p. 408, note 2); they not only do convince the mystic, but they also have a right to do so (p. 422); for "they are absolutely sensational in their epistemological quality" (p. 424); they are "definite perceptions of



fact" (p. 454); he cannot help ascribing some metaphysical significance to his own anaesthetic revelation of the reconciliation of opposites (p. 388). On the other hand, he admits that, since the mystical illumination is incommunicable, it is not authoritative for anyone but the mystic himself (p. 422), and even that the mystical feeling has no specific intellectual content of its own (p. 425).

Without attempting to unify these statements, let us examine the argument for mysticism upon which James has seemed, at least, to bestow the authority of a great name in scientific psychology. It is admitted that the sectarian or philosophical peculiarities of each class of mystic can be traced to a source other than the mystical experience itself. Thus the universal factor of the revelation is "capable," James remarks, "of forming matrimonial alliances with material furnished by the most diverse philosophies and theologies" (p. 425). Is the figure of matrimony really applicable to the facts? Between the universal and the sectarian factors in the mystical revelation, is there any such difference in nature and origin? May not the two be continuous, so that, just as the sectarian factor is accounted for by particular conditions without reference to ontology, so the universal factor is explained by general conditions? I shall endeavor to show that this is the case.

(1) The universal elements in the mystical revelation are generalized from selected cases, and in fact from cases so selected as to secure approximately uniform subjective conditions and modes of mental operation. The selection is, of course, unintentional, but it is actual. How unintentional selection occurs can easily be illustrated. If we put into a class by themselves all the persons whom we can find who have witnessed an earthquake, and then ask them their opinion of free trade and protection, we shall probably not select them in any such way as to affect the average of the views that they render. But if we ask the same question of a group composed of men who have read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, we shall probably "load the dice," since the mental

habits of philosophers, as well as the substance of their theories, is likely to incline them to a particular side of the question. Now, when we heap up the testimonies of mystics, we similarly gather together a class of mental tendencies that we are not looking for, and specifically tendencies that affect the thing that we are looking for. The difficulty is the same as one that attends the question-circular method of securing information concerning private religious experiences. In both cases, the persons who are most ready to give a full account of their inner life constitute a homogeneous temperamental group; or, rather, they represent only the extreme wing of such a group. For the same quality that determines free communicativeness determines also a certain type of religious experience. The extreme cases of this type are reported with especial fullness; but the reports of other cases, even within the same type, are relatively meagre. Thus arises a misleading appearance of a break between certain religious experiences and the more ordinary life of religious men. Thus arises also a degree of uniformity in the returns that would disappear if the data were gathered with equal fullness from a wider range.

(2) Nor is this all. One of the particular qualities unintentionally selected in collections of mystical experiences is of a kind to determine directly the degree of certainty with which one asserts one's religious beliefs. No psychologist will question that mystics, as a class, are highly suggestible, or that their suggestibility leads them to regard as actual experiences that which analysis shows to be only interpretations of experience. In this way anything can become a "direct perception of fact." Some Christians, for example, say that they have experienced the atonement; others, that they have consciously realized the presence of a personal devil; still others, that they have recognized as an actual presence each of the three persons of the Trinity. The source of the supposed revelation is not different from the source of the dogma. There is entire continuity; we have dogma asserting itself at one end of the scale as belief, at the other end as intuition. The reason why we do not

readily perceive that this is the fact is that our method of selecting mystical confessions has caused a break to appear where none really exists.

We need only one more factor in order to account completely for the general agreements of mystics as to the content of their revelation. No one will question that there is practically universal human aspiration after the good and after a systematising or unification of our scattered and discordant lives. We have just seen that mystical confessions proceed, in general, from a homogeneous group of minds whose suggestibility is sufficient to give to ideas the force of present experience or intuition. If, now, the formal conditions of trance and trance-like practices provide sensations or other mental modifications that easily suggest the goal of religious aspiration, the suggestible mind of the mystic will do the rest — the goal will be asserted as a present intuition.

(3) Such formal conditions do exist. Before naming them, let us catalogue the more common elements of the mystical experience. They are these: — Loss, in greater or less degree, of the sense of personality; an impression of being "out of the body" and in a spiritual world; a sense of identification more or less complete with the object of one's thought or perception; an agreeable feeling-tone, which may have any degree of intensity, from mere general ease to ecstatic joy. All this is expressed as the realization of a blessed life through union with ultimate spiritual being, a union in which the bonds of body and of individuality are loosed.

A recent writer has shown that such apparent loss of personality merely exhibits in extreme form a sort of abstraction or self-forgetfulness that is entirely commonplace. The psychological condition of the sense of personality is the act of mentally relating the self and its objects, and this mental act has for its physiological background some muscular contraction. Relax the contracted muscle, cease to think the relation, and the sense of personality in some measure dis-

appears.<sup>1</sup> I shall now offer evidence to show that not only the loss of the sense of self, but also the entire series of characteristic mystical intuitions, can be traced to similar formal conditions of the mystic's mind and body.

The typical mystical process, which culminates in trance, is, formally considered, nothing else than partial or complete self-hypnosis. This is the mechanism of the process, whatever be the mental content, and whether or not this content expresses ontological truth. Therefore the most direct method of examining the formal conditions that now interest us is to make the experiment of self-hypnosis.<sup>2</sup> The following is an account of such an experiment. It was undertaken, not from any religious motive, not in the interest of the psychology of religion, but solely for the purpose of seeing hypnosis from the inside.

The subject placed himself in a comfortable position upon a couch and fixed his eyes and attention upon a moderately bright object elevated somewhat above the ordinary plane of vision. After some little time there developed a profoundly new state which can properly be called a mild trance. Its main marks are three: First, the bodily sensations were modified. A sense of strangeness came on, and it increased until the mind seemed to be freed from the body. The body seemed to be *there* rather than *here* — alive, yet not "mine" in the old intimate way. Here is the precise phenomenon upon which theosophists of the type of Mrs. Besant lay so much stress. They interpret it as an actually experienced separation of soul from body. Similarly, Paul was on a certain occasion uncertain whether he was in the body or out of it. The explanation lies in the persistent narrowing or retraction of attention, and the phenomenon is strictly parallel to the psychical anaesthesias, blindnesses, etc., of hysteria,

<sup>1</sup>Ethel Dench Puffer, "The Loss of Personality," *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. lxxxv, pp. 195ff.

<sup>2</sup>There is nothing *per se* injurious in hypnosis. Nevertheless, the dangers that accompany ignorant or careless experimentation in this field are so many and so serious as to render decidedly unwise all efforts at hypnosis except under strict scientific control.

which Paul Janet has so carefully investigated.<sup>3</sup>

One effect of narrowing the attention is that different sensation-groups are less firmly organised in consciousness. A particular group may be so deeply dissociated as to be unrecognised even when attention is turned toward it. We then have psychical (as distinguished from organic) anaesthesia. In the case before us the bodily presence is dimly recognised because the dissociation has not reached this lowest depth.

Second, the self-feeling underwent an equally marked change. It seemed as if the self melted into its object, or as if two fluids were poured together. The result was like a generalization without particulars, or a sort of pure being. The explanation has already been given; attention had been narrowed to such a degree that the usual contrasts and antitheses by means of which we define our world had grown dim. Consciousness was absorbed, as it were, in the bright object at which the eyes gazed, and this one object seemed somehow to become a One-All, at once subject and object, and neither one. Here is a counterpart of the absorption into deity, of which mystical saints speak, a parallel to the realization of a larger life continuous with our own and of the same quality, of which Professor James speaks. These asserted intuitions are obviously interpretations of this formal condition of trance. The claim to having experienced enlargement, absorption, ineffable illumination now becomes entirely intelligible. The experience does tend to be ineffable, certainly, but not because of an unusual fullness of mental content; rather because of an unusual emptiness.

Third, the feeling-tone of the whole was agreeable. In spite of the sense of separation from the body, moreover, this agreeable feeling seemed to rest upon a general bodily resonance, being not unlike the diffused comfort that accompanies complete muscular relaxation after severe muscular effort. It is, indeed, obvious that muscular relaxation was

in this case a chief ground of the agreeable feeling-tone. Moreover, it is easy to see how, from this beginning, if religious auto-suggestion had been active, or even if the strange experiences of the hour had been met with naïve wonder instead of scientific coldness, pleasurable emotion of any degree of intensity might have developed. Here, evidently, is the root of the mystical feeling of attainment, of the resolution of discords, of the goodness of the All.

(4) Confirmation of this explanation may be had by analysing certain features of the anaesthetic process. In general, an anaesthetic acts first as a stimulant and later as a depressant. The final and complete relaxation of the muscular system is frequently preceded by tonic muscular rigidity. The psychical effects of such a change will hardly be realized by anyone who has not become familiar, in his own person, with the relation between muscular tension and anxiety, restlessness, and a divided self, on the one hand, and that between muscular relaxation and calm, poise, and self-reconciliation, on the other. When everything goes wrong, and you cannot adjust yourself to yourself or your work; when you find yourself doing under high tension what ought to be easy; when you cannot let go your cares or secure restful sleep; then hunt for tense muscles and relax them. In forehead, jaws, fingers, legs — somewhere you will find a physical basis or condition of your unrest. Relieve the tension, and your self and your world will be less divided and contradictory; you will experience in some degree the very unification that the mystic looks upon as a revelation. Relaxation has always been one feature of mystical practices, in fact. It is not strange, then, that here and there a medical patient gives a mystical interpretation to the change from tension to relaxation under an anaesthetic. The wonder is rather that such reports are so rare. If a census of them could be taken, I surmise that they would be found to emanate chiefly from minds already occupied before the anaesthesia with the great problem of life.

In short, the mystical revelation can be

<sup>3</sup>His latest exposition of the subject is in *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria* (New York, 1907), Lecture VIII.

traced down to the formal conditions, physiological and psychological, of the mystic himself. Let not this conclusion be misconstrued, however. The point is not that the mystic revelation has a physiological basis; even if there were a direct intuition of God, it would doubtless have law-abiding correlations with brain-processes. What discredits the mystic's theory is that it accepts as immediate intuition what is palpably an interpretation. His spiritual monism may be true or not; that question does not here concern us; the present contention is simply that the mystic acquires his religious convictions precisely as his non-mystical neighbour does, namely, through tradition and instruction, auto-suggestion grown habitual, and reflective analysis. The mystic brings his theological beliefs to the mystical experience; he does not derive them from it.

Thus far we have had before us mystical experiences of the more extreme sort — those that approach or reach the condition of trance. Our conclusion is resisted by appealing to one of the simplest phenomena of ordinary religious experience, which is said to convey to the masses the same kind of certitude that the expert mystic claims for himself. It is declared, in effect, that the consensus of experts is supported by a sort of *consensus populi*. We turn, therefore, to a second supposed scientific support of mysticism.

II. The datum of the second argument is simply the broadly human feeling of the reality of spiritual things. This feeling is said to be the actual basis of men's religious belief. Rather, since feeling, thus described, includes belief, the primary and practically universal religious experience is an experience of belief. The aim of the argument is to show that feeling as such can convey ontological messages which are of final validity. They cannot be criticised by the rational consciousness, it is said, because feeling and reason are incommensurable. The steps of the proof are as follows: Self-direction by means of a rational analysis of conditions is only one way of successfully adjusting ourselves to our environment. Our rational cognitions are only mountain peaks of mind which reach above the clouds; underneath

are unseen foundations of unknown depth and breadth. If we fix attention upon the degree of awareness with which we act, we discriminate between the conscious and the subconscious. If we have in mind self-activity rather than awareness, we distinguish between the voluntary and the automatic. If we take our starting-point in feeling, we contrast the cognitive with the affective life. Of course these three contrasts do not exactly cover one another; yet they do point, in a general way, to the same two contrasting groups of facts. We certainly perform a great many functions which, when we attend to them, appear to be ours chiefly in the sense of feeling or tendency or obscure impulse, rather than either cognition or volition.

By indirect means we discover that such functions are often adjusted to the conditions of life with surprising accuracy. Consider, for example, the delicate responses made by our organic feelings to changes in the quality of the blood. Compared with such responses, our deliberate attempts to regulate diet and exercise are clumsy enough. Similarly, feeling makes a fine reaction to the varying composition and temperature of the atmosphere, and by ways that we do not observe, our conduct is modified accordingly. We are, then, in commerce with a larger world than that of clear perception and self-guided reason. Indeed, the most successful adjustment even to perceived conditions is often made by letting go and drifting with the tide of feeling. This is true not only in matters related to physiological well-being, but also in literary, artistic, and scientific production.

Upon this basis Professors Starbuck and Pratt build a mystical theory. Starbuck maintains that religion is throughout a matter of the affective life; that it is, in fact, directly opposed to the cognitive processes. Feeling and ideation he looks upon as two different means whereby we take note of parts of the general reaction-mass which constitutes the basis of mental life. Feelings as well as ideation give "reports," "hints," and "intimations," not only of organic processes, but also of environing conditions. Religion he looks upon as such a feeling-adjustment to

the larger reality that encompasses the personal life, and he claims that the religious feeling as such contains objective content. The theory is therefore mystical.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, vital feeling is declared by Professor Pratt to be the permanent source of religion. Out of it spring ideas which, though unreasoned, carry irresistible conviction. He is careful to distinguish this immediate certainty contained in religious feeling from arguments drawn from the feeling. He has in mind an experience of belief which possesses absolute certainty of a larger life encircling our own.<sup>5</sup>

No one will deny that religion is primarily an unreasoned reaction. Theology derives its interest from an antecedent religious belief, and this belief springs out of and expresses feelings, impulse, practical attitude. But the fact that belief has this incentive and background does not yet justify the assertion that religious feeling contains in itself final ontological information. Further analysis is needed. We experience a similar certitude with regard to many things—monogamy, for example. Most of us feel certain that monogamy is one of the necessary conditions of a high civilization; just why we think so, however, we find it difficult to say without considerable reflection: if we are very frank with ourselves, we will confess that we do not really know after all, and that our certainty is rather a practical attitude than anything else. May it not be the same way with the religious feeling of certainty, and may not the content of religious belief have arisen through processes of growth and accretion and social tradition precisely as our belief in monogamy has grown definite? Before attempting to answer this question directly, I must point out two or three of the more obvious difficulties that attach to the arguments in question.

In the first place, let us scrutinize the evidence for the existence of an experience of irresistible religious certainty. It is easy

enough to secure testimony to such an experience, of course, and it is upon question-list testimony that Pratt largely relies. But, under appropriate circumstances, one could secure testimony to a direct intuitive certainty of the fidelity of a friend or the perfidy of an enemy; or to an immediate conviction, welling up out of the depths of one's nature, that a certain illness is to have a favourable or unfavourable outcome, or that a certain gold-mine is going to pan out well! That there is a widespread feeling of religious certitude may be granted; but that, apart from auto-suggestion, and when freed from errors of untrained introspection, it has the form attributed to it may be frankly denied.

Again, the argument overlooks a point that is vital to its success. That we are in interaction with environmental factors that do not appear in clear perception is true. Our nervous systems and our moods of feeling register meteorological and other conditions so fine and so complex as to bewilder the imagination. Very likely, as Leibnitz said, we carry within us an index to the entire universe. But this formal statement does not show how we discover the specific character of these environing realities. As a matter of fact, not until our affective responses are brought into the focus of attention, where they can be analysed and their relations consciously noted, do they acquire coherent significance or authority. Our affective responses to the weather become significant, for example, when we definitely note the relation, as Dexter has done, between a certain state of the atmosphere and the conduct of school-children. Feeling yields no direct knowledge of the amount of moisture in the atmosphere. At most, then, feeling can claim to be only one link in a chain of evidence.

In the next place, precisely what ontological message does religious feeling convey? Starbuck declares this question not pertinent, because only feeling can appreciate the deliverances of feeling. If that were so, the way to carry conviction would be to awaken religious feelings in the reader, not to argue the case. To argue that religious feeling conveys truth, and then to avoid the question,

<sup>4</sup>"The Feelings and their Place in Religion," *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, vol. 1, pp. 168ff.

<sup>5</sup>James B. Pratt, *The Psychology of Religious Belief* (New York, 1907), pp. 43, 295, 297.



What truth? looks like a very direct method of discrediting the whole argument. What is the use of arguing before the court of reason that a decision in the court of feeling is correct, if at the same time we deny that the court of reason has jurisdiction in the case, and even confess that the record of the decision in question is entirely inaccessible to said court?

An effort is made to escape this *impasse* by generalizing the content of the supposed feeling-intuition. That is, racial, sectarian, and individual differences are ignored, and the pale remainder upon which religionists agree is declared to constitute a valid intuition. Without stopping to ask how far they really do agree, we may assert at once that this argument for the validity of the supposed intuition destroys itself. For the certainty of the religionist extends to his racial and other peculiar tenets. The alleged intuition of spiritual things grasps them only in some such special form. If, then, a part of the content, as all investigators agree, is a historical accretion, the whole may be, and the claim to final authority is vacated.

III. The tendency of this discussion is toward the view that the supposed mystical revelation is part and parcel of the general historical movement of religious life; its sources are the same, and the superior certainty and authority that it claims for itself are illusory. The illusion arises, specifically, through strong auto-suggestion, which gives the form of reality or experience to ideas or ideals. The mystic does not passively receive a revelation; he actively takes a religious attitude, actively gives himself the cer-

tainty that he believes to be bestowed *ab extra*.

This conclusion, however, does not wholly dispose of mysticism. A problem more difficult than the two that have been touched upon remains behind. For, though we trace the ideas of the mystic to some social tradition that he has imbibed, the tradition as a whole remains to be accounted for. The religious belief of humanity, taken in its grand totality, cannot be a product of external suggestion, as the belief of a single individual may be. It is clearly not the result of critical or analytical reflection. It has been evolved somehow from within the mind of man. We may call this racial auto-suggestion, if we like. However we name it, its analogy with the mystical experience of the individual is unmistakable, and we may even go so far as to say that all real religion consists ultimately in some mystical practice, namely, the making real to ourselves of that which we do not perceive. Here is where the mystic's psychology falls short. He will not admit that his certainty of spiritual things is self-produced; he insists that it is infused. Our need here is a deeper analysis of the function of the will in religion, and specifically in relation to religious certitude. We may be sure that such analysis will lead us toward a faith-philosophy, and away from mysticism. Yet, when such a faith-philosophy has done its utmost, there will remain the question whether our will, after all, is merely ours; whether, indeed, communion with God may not genuinely occur in our religious will-acts, one of which is the auto-suggestion of religious beliefs.



### III

## 1912 - VIRTUE AND THE VIRTUES: A STUDY OF METHOD IN THE TEACHING OF MORALS

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ALTHOUGH my topic concerns the method of moral instruction and training rather than the philosophy of education, it may be well, for the sake of preventing misunderstanding, to state at the outset some of the assumptions that underlie the practical suggestions that I shall offer. I assume, for example, that moral character is altogether a matter of a man's relations to society. Religion thinks of society in a peculiarly broad way, making it include God and our dead, as well as all the living. Concerning religion our state schools are not permitted, and should not be permitted, to give instruction. This limitation must be rigidly maintained in the interest alike of religious liberty and of political equality. I do not desire any recognition of the religious basis of morals. What I hope for is a recognition that life, as far as it is truly successful, is social through and through. I put no stress whatever upon the desirability of an increased use of the Bible or of worship. We must rely first of all upon the right organization and conduct of the school, and upon the teacher's personality, but in addition we should have a definite, systematic, carefully graded scheme for leading pupils, in morals as in everything else, to see just what they are about. This means instruction in morals, but instruction in morals can have its proper effect upon character only when the ideas that are to be communicated develop in the pupil's mind as a phase of his own reaction to a concrete social situation. The problem that I propose to myself is, How can this unity of moral idea and moral reaction be effected in the school?

The reason why we have not made more rapid progress toward a satisfactory method is, in my opinion, that we have given inadequate scrutiny to the *content* of the proposed

instruction. We have given too much attention to the virtues and too little to virtue. I question whether a satisfactory method can be had as long as the basis of the curriculum is a catalog of virtues.

The ancients, as well as the moderns, offer us lists of cardinal or essential virtues. "Prudence, courage, temperance, and justice" is a list that has come down to us all the way from Plato. But what are these cardinal virtues in the concrete? We know that a Sophist as well as a Socrates could lay claim to every one of them. Prudence requires nothing but sufficient wisdom to get what you are after, no matter what this is. So, too, one can have courage in executing any design, good or bad. Nor does temperance or self-control imply anything as to a man's central purpose. That even the concept of justice depends for its meaning upon an antecedent conception of humanity is shown by the fact that the greatest of the ancient philosophers regarded slavery as inherently in accord with human nature, and therefore just.

When we come to modern schedules intended as a basis for a curriculum of instruction in morals, we find certain inequalities that are not recognized in the schemes themselves. The chief part of these lists consists ordinarily of virtues like these: Industry, patience, obedience, courage, self-respect, perseverance, self-control, economy, amiability, contentment, comradeship, fidelity. How much is really implied in such terms? Is industry good *per se*, or does its goodness depend upon the end for which one works? Clearly patience is good only when it is the shortest way to a good end; otherwise impatience is better. Courage on behalf of a good cause is good; otherwise it is bad. Self-respect is good only to the extent that one

is worthy of respect. Economy is good only that one's savings may be used for something worth while. Amiability must be of the kind that distinguishes between good and bad men before we can approve it. There are times when contentment is out of order; and there are conditions in which obedience only prolongs unjust authority, and creates a craven spirit in him who obeys. Even fidelity, as with the political trickster who always "stands by his friends," may imply evasion of the larger good. In short, all these virtues can exist, either singly or in combination, in a character that every one of us would call bad.

Certain of the virtues that appear in these lists, however, are less ambiguous. Thus kindness, unselfishness, helpfulness, and truthfulness point with a fair degree of definiteness to a social end. When we come, finally, to love of parents, we have before us an end that is always unambiguously social. The difference between a virtue like love of parents and a virtue like perseverance lies in two things: Love of parents expresses a social purpose, and it indicates the persons toward whom it is directed, while perseverance does neither of these things.

Now, our first concern in the teaching of morals should be to secure genuine discrimination between social and unsocial ends or purposes, not between abstract or formal virtues. The question to be raised in the pupil's mind concerning an act or a course of action is not, Is it industrious, courageous, persevering? but, What persons does it affect, and how does it affect them?

The trouble with formal moral instruction as it has been understood lies deeper than most of its critics have realized. Times without number we have insisted that a pupil who understands the virtues may not practice them. Yes, but the incurably radical fault of such instruction is its lack of truth. For it has falsely assumed that a pupil who *does* practice the virtues of the schedule will attain to virtue. There are two reasons why this is untrue. The first is that most of the virtues in the catalog are abstract qualities of will, not concrete social purposes; they describe some of the conditions of an effi-

cient will, but they leave out the social mark of a good will. The second reason is that moral character is represented as made up of a combination of qualities or virtues. Socrates declared truly that virtue is one and indivisible, not a collection of virtues. Now, the unity of a good character consists in holding to a social end or purpose through a period of time, and making the details of conduct all contribute to this end.

It follows that the material for moral instruction is the functions of men and of institutions in society. Let us stop studying virtues, and study instead what actual men do, and why they do it. What does a policeman do, and why does he do it? What does the health commissioner do, and why does he do it? What does a judge, a lawyer, an alderman, a grocer, a hod-carrier, a mother, a father, a son, a daughter, do, and why? What does a public library, an art museum, a newspaper, a nickel theater, a billboard, a railroad, a university do? Here is the material upon which children are actually forming their characters anyway, whether we will or no. It has always been so, and it always will be so. The lives with which the child is in contact constitute the primary material for his moral growth. All that the school can possibly do is to improve the use that he makes of it, partly by calling his attention to what would otherwise be overlooked; partly by extending, through literature and history, the range of cases upon which he reacts; partly by reinforcing social incentives; partly by forming the school into a little society which carries on a directed experiment in living.

I am tempted to pause here to remark that the transformation of curriculum and method thus indicated is a part of the reform that is sometimes called the "new education." The old scheme of merely general culture broke down because it taught processes but neglected functions. It insisted that a child must know arithmetic, but it never called his attention to the function of a grocer in society. It was punctilious of linguistic propriety but it had nothing to say about the health of a community, how it is to be preserved, and who is responsible. It taught

historical genealogies, but nothing concerning a favorable birth for the next generation of babies. Many years ago, when the first threshing machine appeared in a certain rural community, several boys were punished because their desire to see it work caused them to be tardy at school. So far was the old-fashioned school from reality. Nor are we ourselves beyond the danger of perpetuating this separation. To teach qualities of character, but not the functions of men and women and children, is to perpetuate it.

Examples of what is now needed are not lacking in Superintendent Carr's proposals, especially for the first, second, and fourth high school years. Here he bases moral instruction directly upon the structure and functions of a mercantile house, the family, the state. In a measure he employs the same method in his proposals for the kindergarten and the first four grades. Even such abstract heads as *helpfulness, kindness, sociability*, seem in several cases to cover the idea of function rather than quality. Yet the old wineskins are still in evidence under many of the captions.

In his proposals for grades five to eight, Mr. Carr seems to me less happy in his conception of material and method. White's "Character Lessons," which are here followed, though they contain material which teachers can use, are constructed upon an inverted method. First come definitions or explanations of a virtue, then illustrations, and finally applications. What is this if not precisely the teaching *about* virtues that has brought formal moral instruction into disrepute? Let us begin a lesson in morals just as we begin one in nature-study, with a concrete case that is at least partly within the pupil's experience. Let the pupil be led to analyze it himself, and to make discovery for himself of the breadth or the narrowness, the social constructiveness or destructiveness, of the conduct involved in it. As for the application — well, we who are in the work of Sunday-school reform directed one of our first and fiercest attacks against the old way of making the application, that is, separating the "lesson" of the lesson from the lesson itself. An examination of the newly adopted

graded lesson systems will show a decided improvement in this respect. Yet here we find a public school lesson on *Industry* that starts out with an explanation of what industry is, then gives examples of industrious merchants, manufacturers, inventors, and naturalists, and ends with an application, not to storekeeping, manufacturing, etc., but to school studies! Does anyone really believe that Willie Green of the fifth grade will study his lessons because John Wanamaker, Thomas A. Edison, and Luther Burbank work hard in their respective occupations? Willie is engaged with functions which to him are different from those of merchant, inventor, and naturalist. At some point in his course it will, perhaps, be worth while for him to study the career of Mr. Wanamaker in order to see what a merchant does for society and how he does it; Mr. Edison's career, to see what an inventor does for society and how he does it; and Mr. Burbank's career, to see how the breeds of plants and of animals can be improved, and why they should be improved; but if you wish to make eleven-year-old Willie Green enjoy hard study you must find your leverage in something that he can recognize as his own present good. A teacher who cannot teach arithmetic so that it seems to Willie to be included in his very own job will scarcely induce mathematical zeal by telling how many hours a day Mr. Edison spends in his laboratory!

The first requirement for an effective system for teaching morals, then, is the frank abandonment of the virtues as the subject-matter of the curriculum, and the substitution therefor of the functions of men and women and children in society. The adoption thus of concrete material will open wide the way to a solution of three troublesome problems, namely, how to secure a truly developmental order of topics from grade to grade; how to awaken a sense of obligation within a scheme of free individual growth, and how to co-ordinate morals with the other subjects of the curriculum.

Curricula based upon "the virtues" are inherently incapable of obeying a genuinely developmental principle. If we have thirty

or forty virtues to teach, with only eight grades in which to teach them, we must distribute the virtues pigeon-hole fashion, with only partial regard for the order of growth in the pupil's personality. We inevitably distribute the virtues through the eight years in a serial order that is artificial. Mr. Carr has done about as well as anybody can do with such a scheme, yet his plan shows many misadjustments like these: *Obedience* is a second-grade subject only, though the hardest struggle to obey comes later; *truthfulness* and *honesty* appear in the second and fifth grades only; *cheerfulness* appears nowhere above the third grade, and *justice* in the seventh only. Now, in the life of the child there is no such serial order of moral issues. Justice, cheerfulness, unselfishness, honesty, truthfulness are appropriate and needful at every stage of growth. The fact is that we have here two incommensurables, a set of abstract moral qualities and a growing child, with a repetition of the ancient fallacy of attempting to fit the child to the curriculum rather than the curriculum to the child.

That a way out of the difficulty can be found by building the curriculum upon the social functions of human beings appears from three considerations. *First*, these functions can be arranged in an ascending order of complexity, from washing our faces and saying "please," to managing a factory, or administering the laws of a nation. *Second*, the ascending order of complexity is substantially an ascending order of sociality. Not that family affection with which the child begins is ever to be outgrown, but that social feeling, motive, and purpose increase in both breadth and depth as social functions radiate normally from the hearth to the larger and more complex organizations of men. *Third*, this ascending order of functions and motives, coincides in general with the child's increasing contact with persons and institutions, and with his increasing assumption of responsibility.

The order of topics thus implied has as its first member the daily life of the household and what each member of it (father, mother, children, hired helpers) contributes

to it. The concluding topics of the series will concern social life in its widest aspects (the economic order, poverty, vice, crime, immigration, wealth, marriage and divorce, world peace, for example), with such analysis of causes and effects as to locate responsibilities. Between these two extremes will appear the persons who minister to the household from outside it (the butcher, the baker, the grocer, the milkman, the letter-carrier); then the persons and institutions that the child encounters when he begins to go to school and to execute errands for father and mother (the teacher, playmates, the street railroad, the fire department, the policeman); then the industries of the community, whether agricultural, manufacturing, or commercial; then the social institutions of the community (schools, libraries, churches, the local government); then the activities of the county, state, and federal government; then institutions like railroads, water and light companies, banks, newspapers, theaters; at last the specialized professional and technical occupations. Here is a genuinely progressive order that coincides substantially with the growth of the child's social experience from the kindergarten to the end of the high-school course. In addition, there will be woven into these topics the social aspects of health and disease, sexual hygiene, and preparation for marriage.

Let us see, now, whether this material is appropriate for awakening a sense of obligation within free individual growth. Under exceptional circumstances you may evoke effective moral emotions by sharply defining a virtue or a fault and adducing biographical examples of it. But the only generally valid method consists in causing the child to define to himself his own purpose in situations that he actually experiences. When I ask myself what I am really after and why, I compare and contrast one purpose with another, and inevitably I begin to estimate values and to approve and condemn. Now, the curriculum that I have sketched is based upon the changing social contacts and reactions of the pupil. Lead him to ask, What does a street railroad do for the community? and then, What do I do in this situation? and

he will almost inevitably appreciate the obligation to pay his fare. A boy was throwing stones at a street lamp. A passer-by said, "Why do you wish to break your father's lamp?" "It isn't my father's lamp," replied the boy. "Who pays for street lamps, then?" was the rejoinder. A not less pointed example of the effect of defining one's purpose to one's self is this: Get a boy to tell you what he really wants in the next game of baseball that he plays, and you will draw out of him the right material for awakening indignation and scorn, admiration, and social purpose. I would have in the curriculum the subjects of doll play and other make-believe plays; marbles, tops, mumblety peg, and jackstones; tag, leap frog, and baseball; running races, tournaments, picnics—not as applications of principles brought from who-knows-where, but as living tissue of morals. Just so the entire series of the child's extending social contacts can be so used as to awaken intelligent approvals and condemnations, and analysis of one's own conduct.

Is it not evident, finally, that here is the solution of the problem of co-ordinating moral instruction with other subjects? Many of our teachers, perhaps most, doubt the wisdom of a specific course on morals. It is likely, they think, to become abstract. Besides, is not every subject that is well taught a moral discipline? Does not arithmetic, because it requires accuracy, train to truthfulness? And so on. Now, it is true that everything in the school can be made serviceable to character. But it is easy to overestimate the value of merely formal discipline. With our lips we all profess that the pupil's interest and motive for study should be found in the thing studied. Yet the asserted moral value of mathematics resides not in the content, but in the way it is studied—in the mere form of the act, not

the content of it. The assertion that such merely formal training in mathematics appreciably conduces to truthfulness is open to the gravest doubt. You lose most of the moral value of anything when you separate it from the functions in which it has its origin. Scoring a baseball game accurately or keeping an accurate expense account does train to truthfulness, however, because here form is not separated from content. Why, now, should teachers longer consent that arithmetic or any school subject whatever shall be abstracted from the social functions to which it belongs in real life? Why should the school not recognize that arithmetic is a phase of buying and selling, planting and harvesting, building a house, cooking, trimming a gown, even playing the games of boys and girls? Now, give us really vital material throughout the school, and the course in morals that I have outlined will not seem to be lugged in. It will deal with the primary phase of all the material of all the subjects; that is, with the co-operative purposes and functions of men in subduing nature and in enriching social existence. Language-study, number-study, earth science, history, literature—these exist at all because they minister to the ends of a rational will. Study of the ends of a rational will is the study of morals. Therefore the study of morals is not only not foreign to the other school studies, it is the most natural introduction to every one of them, and it alone can lend to them the complete concreteness that modern educational theory demands. Here, then, is the principle requisite for the co-ordination of morals with other subjects. The study of morals presents the material of education in its wholeness as human experience in a purposeful social life; the other studies have to do with parts or phases of this material.



## IV

### 1915 - ON HAVING FRIENDS: A STUDY OF SOCIAL VALUES

*The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, March 18, 1915

BY FAR THE largest part of our social psychology consists of analyses, often genetic, of the idea-content of social consciousness. Upon social motives, values, and what may be called the sense of social reality comparatively little work has been done. Of the little that has been done, nearly all has reference to phenomena of instinct and impulse, as the actions of gregarious animals, of young children, or of crowds. Our more deliberate social acts and attitudes, in which we define to ourselves values that may be obscure or possibly lacking at more instinctive levels of conduct, have rarely been directly studied. Yet they offer an inviting field for research, a field that is by no means preempted by psycho-biological investigations of group conduct. In what sorts of social object or of social activity does developed mind take satisfaction? What are its preferences when mutually exclusive satisfactions are in question? What is social objectivity of mind, and how do we become conscious of our social reals? We shall not know the solution of these problems until to our observation of animals, of children, and of crowds, we add parallel observation of civilized men and women in their controlled, consciously social reactions.

The purpose of this article is to open up a single experience of this sort so as to display the presence, and to some extent, the nature of such problems. I choose for examination the familiar experience of *having a friend*—not friendship, which is an abstraction, nor yet the content of the idea "friend," but having a friend, an experience in which a concrete social real is recognized as present, is socially valued, and is preferred to other goods. A case of the kind may be described as follows: My friend and I, chatting by an open fire, now and then fall into the silence,

well recognized in the literature of affection, in which each friend "has" the other in an intimacy closer than conversation. Every one of us, I suppose, has often had this experience. Here, then, is society vividly real in the psychologist's own experience; here is social value clearly realized without excitement and without distraction. The conditions for introspective analysis are favorable.

How, then, shall we describe the experience of friends who thus mutually have and enjoy each other? Reserving for a time the closer analysis that we call psychology, let us first of all examine the standpoint of the experience as it naïvely occurs. *Prima facie*, then, this is an experience of enjoying my friend himself, not merely the advantages that he brings to me. Friendship is sharply antithetical to barter. Even if the mutual conferring of advantages should be an awakener and promoter of mutual regard, nevertheless one comes at last to value the giver above the gift; and when friendship is ripe, one is ready to stand by one's friend to the sacrifice of every advantage to oneself except the advantage of being and of having a friend. The valued object is my friend himself; or rather, it is each of us, since each takes the other's standpoint as his own.

If we ask the naïve consciousness why a giver is valued above his gift, this, I take it, is the answer that we receive: The giver has experiences of his own, as the gift has not. The significance of friendship depends upon a second experiencing, so that I actually value another's joy, I suffer another's pain.

This, I think, is a fair statement of the point of view of every one of us when we "have" our friends in the greatest intimacy. Subsequent analysis may show that the experience is not as simple as it seems; conceivably we shall find self-delusion to be of



the essence of it. But in any case we have this datum: At times each of us seems to enjoy not only objects of experience, but also a second experiencing of them; or, to state the matter in a slightly different way, we enjoy not only objects as experienced, but also objects as *experiencing*.

As far as I can see, the psychology of values has no other datum quite as simple and luminous as valuing an object, or even seeming to value it, because it experiences. I surmise that the proposition, "I like this Christmas gift," is harder to construe than the proposition, "I love the giver"; that the value of a painting is far less obvious than the value of any person who enjoys looking at it; that, indeed, the most effective clue to our whole value-consciousness is the simple happiness of friends merely in having one another, or more broadly stated, any disinterested regard of one person for another.

What has psychology undertaken to do with this kind of fact? We shall find that attention has been given almost exclusively to two phases of it—it has been treated as a process having a determinable mechanism, and as a process of knowing, while the functional aspect has been relatively neglected. How shall we define the value that is here actualized? In what sense does disinterested regard for a friend constitute adjustment to environment? These questions are rarely asked even in our social psychology. In order that the situation may clearly appear, let us review the questions, bearing upon this experience, for which answers have been sought:

A. Psychology has analyzed certain elements and processes involved in social intercourse, such as suggestion and imitation, idealization, and tender emotion.

B. Considerable progress has been made toward a genetic account of social intercourse. We can accept as established that I do not first exist as a self-conscious individual and afterward form bonds with similar self-subsistent selves, but that some sort of social bond or continuity is primordial, and that the process whereby I arrive at self-regard is identical with the process whereby I become acquainted with my fellows.

C. Psychology asks, also, "How do I know that other minds exist?" Eight kinds of answer have been given: (1) I touch, see, and hear my fellow men. (2) I know other minds by analogy between the motions of my own body, which I know to be associated with consciousness, and the observed motions of other like bodies.<sup>1</sup> (3) My knowledge of a second nervous system somehow brings me closer to knowing that another mind exists.<sup>2</sup> (4) The bridge between my mind and my neighbor's is not physical, but spiritual. Through prior knowledge of God I have a social category which I can use in the interpretation of sense data.<sup>3</sup> (5) My knowledge of the existence of other persons is a postulate of my life as a moral person (Fichte). (6) My knowledge of other minds is merely a particular instance of the universal method of the mind in outrunning the data of experience in the interest of subjective needs.<sup>4</sup> (7) My knowledge of other minds is direct and intuitive. Minds are continuous with one another; bodies do not come between.<sup>5</sup> (8) I know other minds by being in some degree or sense the very

<sup>1</sup>F. H. Bradley, "Appearance and Reality," London, 1893, 255. The position of J. H. Leuba ("Religion and the Discovery of Truth," this *Journal*, Vol. IX, pages 406-411) is expressed thus: "Human beings are objects of sense to me: I touch, see, hear, them. They behave exactly as I do and respond obviously to my presence. These beings meet every scientific test of my belief that they think and feel as I do." Here three different theories seem to be mixed together: (1) A naive theory of perception. (2) A theory of analogy. (3) A theory of verification of a hypothesis by experiment. It would be interesting if Professor Leuba would indicate the nature of the scientific evidence that he himself thinks and feels, and then analyze the logic of the experiment that seems to him to prove that others think and feel as he does.

<sup>2</sup>H. R. Marshall, "Consciousness," New York, 1909, pages 173ff. Karl Pearson suggests that if I could connect your brain and mine by a commissure of nerve substance, I should then have a direct sense-impression of your consciousness. "Grammar of Science," London, 1900, pages 48-50. But would I then know you as experiencing? If not, how does Pearson's suggestion help?

<sup>3</sup>W. E. Hocking, "The Meaning of God," etc. New Haven, 1912, pages 297-300.

<sup>4</sup>G. M. Stratton, "Psychology of the Religious Life," London, 1911, pages 364ff.

<sup>5</sup>J. E. Boodin, "Individual and Social Minds," this *Journal*, Vol. X (1913), pages 169-180.

thing that I know. Individuals "may be included within other individuals."<sup>6</sup>

Some of these theories dislocate the question at the outset by assuming that the psychic individual is a sort of atomic thing-in-itself, whereas the nature of the individual is precisely what, among other things, the question seeks to determine. If we start with atomic minds, there is slight chance that we shall ever construe their knowledge of one another. Nor would the fact that such minds feel a need for one another improve our chances very much. For the need that each atom feels is its own need; an atom feeling for something is simply an atom turning a little faster on its own axis. Moreover, how does a sense of need for anything arise? We acquire an appetite for sweets by eating sweets, a desire for music by hearing music, a longing for friends by first having friends. My need, then, is not the ground of my knowledge that objects of a certain class exist, but a consequence of knowing some objects of this class.

As to the other types of theory concerning our knowledge of other minds, the suggestion is in order that appeal to such concepts as substance and universal mind may well be postponed until the datum itself has been thoroughly examined. Now, the experience out of which the question arises is an experience of friends and enemies. You and I exist for each other not otherwise than in the experience of actualized value such as the term mutual regard connotes. Friendship or the contrary includes the *discovery of an alter*, not merely exegesis of an object originally known simply as existing. The datum for our inquiry is not analyzed, but twisted, when we attempt to think the real existence of others apart from the conditions of social realization. To ask how I know that you exist, the term existence being emptied of such connotations, is like asking me to smile broadly and at the same time whistle. The question, in this form, is simply an in-

tellectual teasing game.<sup>7</sup> And this remark applies equally to my knowledge of my own existence. I do not observe myself as simply there, like a museum specimen in a glass jar. *Disinterested* introspection is powerless to construe the sense of "mine"; this term has meaning at all only from an interested standpoint, namely, the actualized value connoted by the term self-regard. I find myself by being a friend to myself.

In order to give objective meaning to the inquiry into our knowledge of other minds, we must proceed from a functional point of view. Our questions then become somewhat like these: How shall we objectively define the value that is the backbone of acquaintance with others? In what parts of our total experience are such values actualized? Considering friendship as a case of successful adjustment, to what is one herein adjusted? How is this social value related to other values?

D. To one of these questions, What is it that I value when I have a friend? psychology gives an answer that tends to justify the traditional analysis of friendship. The notion that regard for others is only refined or subtle self-regard has been exploded.<sup>8</sup> The springs of conduct are released with equal directness by one's own needs and by the needs of others. Parental care is only the most conspicuous instance; the fact is found at all levels of life from maternal instinct to a Lake Mohonk Conference.

E. It would be interesting, if the limitations of this discussion were not so narrow, to inquire what has been done toward determining in what parts of our total experience social values of the primary type are actualized. But this point must go untouched in order that we may consider briefly to what we become adjusted in a well-developed social experience. The naïve answer, as we

<sup>6</sup>Some of the writers to whom I have referred see that affectionate regard is inherently involved in the realization of a *socius*. See Royce, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pages 457-459.

<sup>7</sup>Nowhere, perhaps, is this more evident than in the enlarged sense that many psychologists give to the self in such terms as "social self." This identification of self-interest with social interest means that regard for others is as deep in us as regard for our particular self.

<sup>8</sup>J. Royce, "The World and the Individual," Vol. 2, New York, 1901, page 238. See also pages 168-174. Boodin (*op. cit.*, pages 174ff.) also holds that minds overlap.

have seen, is that in friendship I am adjusted to my friend himself as experiencing. Friendship may involve adjustment to something else through my friend, but the primary fact appears to be adjustment to him, not merely *through* him. *Prima facie*, then, the most clearly social experience consists not merely in having certain mental contents, but in a multiple having of them.

What, now, have psychologists done with this apparently multiple experiencing? Thus far they have done little. Psychology commonly analyzes mental processes "as such," regardless of the fact that some are Smith's mental processes, and some are Jones's. Though for certain purposes this suffices, it results in odd abstractness. It sometimes makes our social psychology as remote from our social experience as the Absolute Mind of the idealists is from my appetite for dinner. When, for example, we conceive everything psychical as experience-in-general, conversation between Smith and Jones is construed wholly as internal conversation, after the fashion of my debates with myself when I am endeavoring to make up my mind. Smith now becomes thought-of-Smith, and Jones becomes thought-of-Jones. On this basis the genetic problem of *ego* and *alter* becomes simple—we have merely to trace the building up of the Jones-thought in connection with the Smith-thought, and of course the problem is unchanged if the psychologist himself happens to bear the name of Jones. Now, this merely content-wise description of social consciousness leaves out social value as it is experienced by Jones and Smith. To them the central interest of the whole situation is interest in each other as *experiencing* and as *having attitudes*.

Psychologists do not really succeed in extruding altogether the notion of multiple experiencing, however. For the object that psychology examines is never merely thought-

of-mental-process, but mental process itself objectively there and not identified with the psychologist's own mental process of the moment. Indeed, we need only analyze the experience of psychologizing to see that the notion of an experience-in-general can never be a finality. When I, Jones, start to psychologize, I first of all attempt an act of self-diremption; I lay aside my friend Smith as a social real and substitute for him a Smith-idea in which I now, as psychologist, take only the same kind of interest that I take in a guinea-pig-idea, or a potato-idea. Yet, even as psychologist I finally bring the results of my research to some Smith or other for his judgment. Psychology itself exists only as a social possession; it is a multiple experiencing. When I read psychological publications I always assume a second experiencing to which my present experience attributes value. I take the same attitude toward the individuals upon whom I make experiments. And if, from all these minds, I construct the notion of mind-as-such, or experience-in-general, the result is a curious one—my attention merely passes back and forth between the standpoint of myself as this particular psychologist and the standpoint of an ideal psychologist.

The conclusion is: (1) That the experience of having a friend involves valuing an object as experiencing. (2) That such valuing includes, and is the source of, our certainty of other minds. (3) That when psychology seems to translate our naïve social consciousness into experience without experiencers, it really does nothing of the sort, but at most substitutes for one set of experiencers another set of them, namely, psychologists, actual and ideal, together with *Versuchspersonen*. (4) That functional psychology errs when it treats consciousness as merely an instrument of adjustment; we adjust ourselves to it, not merely *through* it.

## 1921 - THE FUNCTIONS OF CHILDREN IN SOCIETY \*

*Religious Education*, February, 1921

IN THE LIFE of our species, birth and death play correlative parts. Death removes individuals who through weakness, as of old age, can no longer perform their proportionate part of the labor that the common weal requires. It lifts from the species another burden, also, by removing those whose minds, having lost their plasticity, not only fail to make fresh adjustments themselves, but also put obstacles in the way of needed changes. Birth, on the other hand, provides a constant renewal of capacity for work; it provides, likewise, that there shall always be present in the species variation (fresh individual starting points) and a large amount of the plasticity that is essential for new adjustments of and in the species.

The young, accordingly, have two main sorts of function. The first is to supply fresh vigor for keeping human life going upon the level that it has already attained; in other words, to acquire and practice the modes of conduct—economic, esthetic, intellectual, etc.—that deserve to be continued from generation to generation. The second is to acquire during the more plastic years, and to carry on into maturity, the habits, the attitudes, and the ideals that are required for the improvement of our modes of life.

One of these two sorts of function is conservative in the best sense of this term. Childhood is the great medium of continuity, of transmission from the past across the present to the future. Imagine such a reversal of nature as should cause all individuals born in a generation to start life with mature instead of infantile bodies. Instinct would then have the maximum of power at its disposal, but with no knowledge, no wisdom reaped

from experience. Obviously the result would be the disruption of civilization. Behold, then, the paradox: Childhood, the period in which precedents count least in the mind of the individual, is in its totality the great and indispensable transmitter of precedents; it is the supreme means of social conservation. It is so because it imitates, and being very plastic, adjusts itself, with the minimum of resistance, to things as they are. Most of this is done without planning on our part; the rest is accomplished by education in the strict sense of measures taken by society to give a set to immature minds.

This account of the conservative function of childhood, true as far as it goes, is, however, only a portion of the truth. From a very early period of society until now adults have discriminated between various parts of their own conduct, holding that certain parts are worthy of transmission, others not. The transmissive function of children has accordingly been conceived as selective. They are to serve as a medium for handing on the approved ways of men, not the others, as, for example, a language as it is spoken by persons of taste and discrimination, not as it is spoken by the mass of the population. Education thus tends to incorporate the judgment of each generation upon its own performance, and childhood becomes the main organ of society for the improvement of itself.

Viewing the matter from this angle we reach this preliminary and possibly partial conception of the functions of children in society: Children are to take part, according to their growing capacities, in the activities, the achievements, and the enjoyments, that society at large approves in itself as of permanent worth, and thereby form the habits that society regards as essential or desirable for its continued well being and improvement.

May I pause for a moment to point out that this, which from our mode of approach

\*This article is an expansion and theoretical laying out of a principle already presented in two articles in this magazine, namely:

"The Functions of Children in the Community,"

*Religious Education* xiii (Feb., 1918), 26-32.

"The Nature of Discipline for Democracy," *Religious Education* xiv (June, 1919), 136-146.

appears to be almost self-evident, is by no means a conventional or generally accepted principle? I have said much more than that childhood is not a waiting period; much more than that its activities should be worthwhile ones: we have reached a principle for determining what activities are more worthwhile and what ones less worthwhile in a large area of child life. As against a segregated child world, the activities of which are valued upon a scale that the child will presently abandon, we now contemplate the possibility of treating children as members of society in the same sense in which we adults are members, and of developing in them a consciousness of this membership, together with interested, fully-motivated activities that correspond thereto.

If, then, we had a catalog of things judged worth doing, and of habits worth having, especially a catalog in which the relative importance of each is indicated; and if we had also a parallel catalog of children's capacities at different ages, we could then make a beginning of a list of functions properly graded. The concepts of activity and of habit are here used in a broad sense, of course. An interest in books, pictures, moral improvement, or worship may represent activities and habits as well as interest in getting enough to eat.

The validity of this or of any competing point of view will have to be tested in part by observing the reactions of children in situations that make as easy and spontaneous as practicable the sort of conduct that the theory contemplates. We cannot know what the social capacities of children are until we place them in rich social environments with access to instruments and materials for doing something socially worth while. It will be advisable, then, to analyze a few typical cases in which we already know how children react. I shall take for such analysis as widely unlike cases as playthings, school study, personal relations, and worship.

Mankind appears to be unanimously convinced that occupation with playthings is a proper activity of children, and will be through all generations, world without end. The resulting problem for the educator is

that of guiding this activity toward the best results. But what shall be our standard of "best results?" What do we hope that occupation with playthings will accomplish? What is its function?

This problem has long been recognized, though inadequately for the most part. We agree, no doubt, that toys for mere amusement are essentially functionless. Far preferable are playthings that exercise children's physical and mental powers, especially playthings that educe, as dolls and sets of dishes do, imaginative participation in work of serious import. There is another judgment, too, that we can now utter with confidence: Giving children all their toys ready made is not as good as giving them some complete toys, some partly made, and for the rest, raw materials, good tools, and other conditions favorable for making and even inventing playthings.

It is experimentally known that participation of children in making and even devising their own playthings has the following results to its credit:

1. Early acquaintance with materials and processes that are important in adult life.
2. Acquisition of skills that are of permanent worth.
3. Interest in mastering the mental tools that are required for measuring, computing, getting information, and communicating.
4. Development of esthetic standards and of standards of workmanship.
5. Change in habitual attitudes in the direction of sense of responsibility, foresight, continuity of purpose (finishing a job), and readiness to take the initiative.
6. Experience of cooperation, with resulting habitual attitudes of permanent social worth.

Let it be noted that a child who constructs playthings is an economic producer, not a consumer merely. Further, the policy of letting children become producers of things that children want is in the precise line of their native interests. Here, then, is a case in which, unquestionably, the functions of childhood are brought to their highest development through participation in the perma-



nent interests and occupations of society at large.

The tradition that children are mere dependents, mere consumers, a social class separate from us the producers, has robbed the young of wealth of experience that belongs to them, and that belongs, likewise, to society as a whole. Granted that many activities of children will have little or no significance beyond the moment of their occurrence (as in adult life, too!); granted that some educational activities must take place that are typical of adult life rather than continuous with it in any other sense; granted that drill that looks toward necessary habits, and toward command of language and of number, may have to outrun the pupil's sense of what is immediately useful; nevertheless, can we get a fair perspective of the functions of children unless we experimentally reduce this merely temporary and formal factor of child life and education to the minimum, while we increase, as far as children's happy interests permit, the continuity between child life and adult life in point of purposes, materials, processes, standards, and personal relations?

Let us test this point of view, in the second place, by analysis of the function of study at school. Not only is the opinion of society unanimous that one function of children is to study, but the opinion is so emphatic as to demand that children be forced to study if they cannot be led to do it of their own free will. When, then, is this function at its best? Granted that the ideally best is rarely achievable, and that what we seek is a principle for progress, not for condemnation of school practice, we shall be justified in affirming, upon the basis of school experience, the following important propositions:

1. The function of studying is best fulfilled when the subject-matter that the child puts his mind to has inherent worth both from his own point of view and from that of maturity.

2. When the child thinks most; when, instead of merely memorizing, accepting as true whatever he is told, and passively approving what is offered for approval, he weighs evidence, perceives problems and

seeks for solutions, organizes materials, judges values.

3. When he goes to the best sources of information, and uses them with most discrimination, as contrasted with merely poring over a text-book.

4. When he makes the most important present use of what he studies, as using historical information in working up a pageant, scientific information in personal hygiene and community sanitation, literary information in writing a story or in dramatization, and arithmetical information in measuring things and keeping accounts.

Here, as with playthings, a child function is at its best when it has the greatest continuity with the functions of adults. In point of topic, materials, mental procedure, motive, and use—in all these respects the best practice promotes participation of children in society, not segregation from it. Moreover, where this policy prevails children are less forced, more happily interested. Anyone who has witnessed pupils raising problems and insisting upon a solution; going for information directly to nature and to standard works of reference; refusing to acquiesce in a judgment until the point is clear; putting pieces of evidence together and gloating over the result—anyone who has witnessed this can see that we have habitually underestimated the intellectual capacities of children, and that there is possible a degree of intellectual fellowship between childhood and maturity the existence of which has scarcely been suspected. This is the point of view from which to conceive the study-function of children.

Let us see, in the next place, how we can define children's functions in the sphere of personal relations. We agree, of course, that there belongs to childhood a negative social function, that of refraining from needless annoyance of others, and of acquiring the self-control that this implies. We agree, too, that it belongs to childhood to make agreeable, well-mannered responses to the approaches of others. Our problem concerns what lies beyond these conventional standards. How, for example, can children's powers be most fully enlisted on behalf of



standards? And what possibilities are there in the way of purposeful activities by which children take a responsible place in society, helping carry its burdens, and creating relations of good will?

So much has been said of duties in the home, whereby the child becomes classified as a worker in the same sense in which the father, the mother, the cook, and the coachman are workers, that little need be added on this phase of our question. This little, however, is of prime importance. It is that mere imposition of duties no more meets the situation of children than of parents and employed helpers. There is needed, rather, the experience of thinking and planning together whereby alone habits of foresight and of good judgment are formed. Only so does a child achieve either a full sense of responsibility or the skill and continuity of performance of which he is capable. The functions of children in the home, then, imply just the opposite of segregation and social stratification, namely, continuity with the functions of the adult members. To think with their elders upon important problems (not merely the conduct of the children themselves); to have a real part in the determination of policies; to have a responsible part in executing them; to have graded experience of the control of money, and of making purchases, and a similar graded experience in earning money; to judge results not only of one's own conduct but also of family policies, and to help revise them in the light of experience—all this belongs within the functions of children in the home.

By general agreement children are now regarded as properly having a part in relief work of many kinds, and most denominations invite them to a part on world-wide missions. Our question is, When are such functions at their best? The answer, as before, is to be sought in experience already had. The following judgments represent, I should say, the most progressive thought and practice:

1. It is not enough—it is not even proper—to enlist children's sympathetic aid in works of mercy and help without making provision for the formation of a sound judgment. In such measure as is practicable at

different ages, grounds for action should be canvassed, alternatives should be weighed, and continuity of policy should be sought—continuity in time and continuity with the ripened policies of society. Even kindergarten pupils have been found able to deal in this manner with some of the needs of babies and small children. It is a function of children, then, to recognize and study human distress and need, to plan with one another and with their elders for relieving it, and to carry out their respective parts in enterprises thus planned.

2. This work is at its best when the child cooperates not only with the nearer and smaller units, as the family and the church school, but also with community agencies such as organized charities, visiting nurse associations, settlements, hospitals, and relief committees. The same principle applies also to world welfare (gradation of problems being assumed, of course). In other words, it is the function of children growingly to assume a place as intelligent participants in the established agencies of human welfare.

3. The observation and study here involved are at their best when they go on from the fact of distress or need to the causes thereof. Some persons think it better to postpone such matters till adolescence, even until late adolescence. But they are not postponed even in the child's unguided experience. At an early age he knows a deal about the relation of distress to death, disease, alcoholism, unemployment, low wages, war, and crop failure. It is best that his knowledge on these points should not be merely hearsay, but accurate, scientifically related, and illuminated at every point by the highest ideals. This is the natural introduction of the young to the problems of social reform and reconstruction.

The recent intelligent and effective participation of children in war service needs to be paralleled by continuous and continuously studied participation in the work of relief and betterment. That the activities here proposed are interesting to children is well known. So, once more, we conceive their

functions in terms of interested participation with society at large in its serious work.

Our fourth case for analysis is children's worship. I shall assume without evidence that children are capable of genuine devotional exercises as early as the kindergarten age at least, and that some of these exercises may well be carried on in groups of children of similar age segregated from older persons except the leaders. Three questions remain: Is there, in addition, a place for common worship of children and adults? How shall we judge the content of thought and aspiration in children's worship, and what part, if any, should children have in planning and conducting worship? Experience in this field points toward the following answers:

1. Worship can be vitally shared by children and adults to their mutual benefit provided that it deals with experiences that are common to both, and awakens aspirations that both can appreciate. There is a wide area of such aspirations and experiences.

2. Childishness in worship, whether in graded groups or in private devotions, is unnecessary. The essentially pagan prayer of naïve selfishness, and the prayer of (usually only symbolical) saccharine child-piety should be avoided and prevented. Under wise leadership children willingly reflect upon really important, ethical meanings of life, and bring them to dignified utterance.

3. In the sphere of worship, as well as in that of playthings, of study, and of human relations, cooperative thinking, planning, and execution have been found entirely practicable. There is no occasion for preliminary, unappreciative use of formulated prayers.

The theory with which we started, that children are at their best when they interestedly participate with adults in the serious business of life, meets its severest test, perhaps, in the sphere of worship. For here we have to do with the ethical inwardness of which children are often supposed to have only a minimum or none at all. But a little thought will make clear that wherever one's will is reflectively enlisted in important hu-

mane interests, as the present hunger of children in many parts of the world, ethical inwardness is present in one of its most vital forms. No one will question that thought for suffering humanity has an important place in prayer. Let this serve as an example of a wide range of ethical interests that children are capable of experiencing in their worship. Another large area concerns the directly personal problems of conscience, or of self-mastery in difficult situations. Of healthy-minded ethical inwardness, then, there need be no lack. That it can take the form of communion with God, also, ought to be clear; indeed, is it not easier for children than for adults?

Let not this presentation of the continuity of the functions of children and adults be supposed to justify either the imposition of adult points of view upon children's minds or the overloading of young shoulders. Quite the contrary. The entire argument condemns existing impositions, specifically the present adult-imposed limitations of the scope of children's activities. We are to emancipate the children by giving them opportunity adequate to their powers. As a matter of fact, all the typical educational experiences that have been mentioned show us children most interested, eager, and happy at the precise points where their participation in important matters is greatest.

Our immediate need is detailed information as to how children of all ages freely react when opportunities for such participation are favorably presented. The child-study movement, and works on the psychology of childhood, offer us little help at this point. They do not ask our question, and of course they do not answer it. "The child," to them, is a sort of composite photograph of children partly under the imposed limitations above mentioned, and partly under conditions of neglect. In an earlier article, referred to at the beginning, I attempted a catalog of the functions of children in the community. It is in fact only a set of headings for a possible catalog. In order to fill it out there must be a large collection of authentic instances of the free activities of children under an educational regimen, in

home and school, that provides the right sort of opportunity.

Observation of this sort would produce, after a time, a set of answers to such questions as these: What helpful home activities are children of different ages, boys and girls, known to have assumed and carried out without compulsion? What sorts have been attempted but abandoned? What mistakes have been made? What interests of the family have been thought about and dealt with in cooperation with other members of the family? What playthings have children produced? What self-directed play has occurred? What capacity have children shown for making purchases for themselves or for the family? For saving and wise planning of expenditures? For earning money? For keeping accounts? What questions have they asked about God, the Bible, right and wrong, etc.? What interests have they shown in literature, pictures, music, nature; and what have they done with respect thereto?

Parallel data would come from the day school and from the church school. With respect to the latter we need detailed answers to such questions as: *a.* The capacities of children of different ages for participation in the management of class, department, and school. Instances are known in which children even of kindergarten age have made rules for their conduct in their class, and have loyally stood by the enforcement of them. Election of officers and determination of their duties have occurred in the first grade. In the sixth grade children have conducted business meetings in accordance with the rules of order. Children and young people above this grade have had representatives in the general administration of the school. It is perfectly practicable to fill in details like these for all ages. *b.* The capacities of children for devising and managing social affairs, such as parties, excursions, celebrations, and picnics. *c.* The capacities of children for interested participation in works of mercy and help, in missions, and in social reforms. *d.* Capacities for worship expressive of their own thought and purpose, and for the conduct of worship. *e.* Capacities for appreciating religious and moral

problems, and for using sources of material and processes of thought and imagination required for the solution of them. *f.* Capacities for esthetic appreciation and art production. In and through all these inquiries a constant question should be, What capacities for cooperation have been shown—cooperation with children of one's own age, with younger children, with older children, and with adults?

Detailed information of this kind is one *sine qua non* of any justifiable confidence in our methods and our curricula. Of course this implies that the necessary reform of religious education has "only just begun to get started." The theory of interest that has thus far controlled even our reform movement is incomplete. In particular, it is a theory of interest in materials of thought and imagination rather than interest in ends, and in individual rather than cooperative procedure. If, now, we can make a fresh start from the standpoint of children's functions in society, we shall find opening out before us the most fascinating vistas of unprecedented things to be done—facts to be ascertained, interpretations to be made, experiments to be carried through, teaching processes to be transformed, regeneration of the curriculum—all focusing upon the one end of helping the young to live more largely, to be more religious, here and now!

Partly implicit in much that I have said is the idea that one phase of the proper functions of children is passing free judgments upon moral and religious matters. There is only one known way of acquiring a mature judgment upon anything, and this is practice in judging the things in question. A remaining question, then, and a vital one for educational policy, concerns the relation between the accepted standards of society and free thinking on the part of children. We have seen that education attempts to guide the young toward modes of life that society approves in itself, and away from those that it condemns in itself. But what provision do we make for perpetuating and improving critical evaluation of society's conduct? Shall we use the schools as a means of propaganda for what we approve,

treating our present standards as a finality, or shall we endeavor to develop through the schools a re-judging of our own approvals? Shall the state train its children simply to admire and glorify the constitution as it is, or rather to participate with adults in the consciousness of our human limitations and imperfections even where we of the older generation have done our best? Shall religion endeavor through the church school simply to propagate itself, or to develop habits of insight that, leading to warm appreciation for what is best in religious history, shall at the same time and by the same means foster the spirit of religious reform?

The child begins his life unfettered by precedents, ignorant of conventionalities. But he accepts precedents readily, and he easily becomes in many respects most conventional. Think of the conventional class distinctions that often become habitual and firmly set before childhood is half over. On the other hand, think of the drastic logic with which children sometimes judge our conventional standards. Here is opportunity, if we will use it, for developing a habit of valuation and re-valuation. If we have the courage to do so, we can make education an instrument of the "divine discontent" that we know is an indispensable condition of

moral and religious progress. With our lips we glorify the prophetic spirit. Theoretically we rely upon an historically developing divine inspiration. Jesus is reported to have said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." What provision, then, have we for the necessary listening for the new truth, for apprehending the unprecedented in religion?

The capacity for vision may be deadened, perverted, thwarted by an otherwise effective system of religious education. We need frankly to recognize in the freshness and plasticity of the child mind a divine provision for a never-ending renewal of the spiritual sensitiveness and capacity for dissent upon which prophetic religion depends. It is a function of children, then, along with their efforts to live up to existing standards, and especially in connection with their worship, to pass free judgments of value upon the life that they know, and to form the habit of thus judging. The true teacher of religion, as of anything else, will rejoice when pupils ask, "Is this actually so? Is this rule, standard, or ideal, a binding one? Is the good at which we are aiming sufficiently good? Is this really God's point of view?"

## VI

### 1936 - THE ELUSIVENESS OF "RELIGION"

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IS RELIGION a factor—a clearly identifiable factor—in the development of personality? The asking of this question can be justified by several considerations. For example, for a third of a century the conventions and the publications of the Religious Education Association have been discussing the function of religion in the formation of character, yet with so little tangible result that another convention upon this theme

appears to be required. There must be many persons who have felt themselves to be upon a hill-top of insight when attending conference on this subject, or when reading articles or books about it, only to be puzzled later by the ineffectiveness of their supposed insight. It is as if an electric current that illuminates the hill-top of general notions had not been switched on in the plains and valleys of personal and institutional life.

A strange lag of this kind even where the religious-education movement has been approved was noted in our Association as much as twenty years ago; apparently this lag has increased. Moreover, investigation has shown that in the country at large there is a hiatus between what workers in religious education actually believe with respect to character formation and what they suppose they believe. The history of this matter seems to indicate that, even where we have set up reasoned principles for religious guidance, some not-clearly-recognized current in human life has been the main determinant of what we actually are.

Possibly one who many years ago challenged even the supporters of our Association with the question, "Do You Really Believe in Religious Education?" may be pardoned if he tells how the question that opens the first paragraph of this article developed in his own mind. From the early years of our movement I began to perceive that the search for effective *method* in the teaching of religion resolved itself, where it was most thorough-going, into a search for effective *religion*. New religious emphases and silences sprang up wherever critical intelligence was applied to the problem. Therefore I repeatedly declared that the religious-education movement was and must be a movement for the re-making of religion itself. I maintained, further, that effective method in the teaching of religion must be derived directly from the nature of the religion to be taught—It could not be imported from the public schools and merely "applied." Thus, though our enterprise seemed to me both to dignify and enfranchise the religious approach to life, I was obliged to deny that religion is a thing *per se* that merely uses education as an instrument.

Meantime my study of the psychology of religion supplied a background within which these educational views came to have their setting. It is notorious that the term "religion" has no generally-accepted denotation even among the learned. Variant definitions by the score have been assembled, each of these definitions representing an endeavor to

identify either what is common in all religions (note the plural), or what is from some point of view most significant in them (as, the god-idea, the unity of self and society, the unity of self and the cosmos, the sacredness of this or that, the integration of values, worship, etc.).

When anybody writes about "religion," then, whether he writes as a propagandist or as a man of science, he discusses, in effect, what most interests him in an enormous complex within which various other interests might lead to as many different sorts of writing. Similarly, wherever an individual is purposefully religious (as contrasted with mere religiosity, which is nebulous), he does not devote himself to "religion," nor does he employ "religion"; rather, he devotes himself to ends, or engages in processes, that are or seem worth while in themselves and acquire the sacredness of religion because of this, their worth.

It follows that we can hope for a fruitful discussion of "the contribution of religion to personality development" only on condition that we have in mind some particular type or types of conduct, purpose, or belief called religious. "Religion" contributes nothing to character.

Here we come upon a part of the explanation of the failure to control our plain-and-valley experience by our R.E.A. hill-top ideas. Into our discussion meetings and our discussion pages we have not taken enough of the specific motives and purposes that actually control us—not enough, that is, to enable us to achieve, through interchange of ideas, any fundamental reconstruction of our daily selves, to say nothing of our pupils! Indeed, there is ground for apprehension that our large and inspiring general ideas have been used as a refuge from the troublesome actualities of our detailed experience. If we have cultivated in ourselves or in our pupils "religion in general," we have chased an illusion. If we have failed to make sharp the actual conflicts within the area of what is called "religion"; if we have avoided bringing into the open the under-cover clash of one type of religion with another in our own communities, our own communions,



and our own souls, we have missed something of reality in our own religious experience and in our work as educators. "Religion" we have not; instead, we have this and that motive, habit, and point of view that claim to be sacred and worthy of our utmost devotion. Several of these points of view, habits, and motives ordinarily combine in an individual, and always such a combination exists in whatever is called "a" religion.

Not only, then, should our convention endeavor to get down to such details, or up to them, but also to ferret out the contradictions in them, and the effects upon personality of loyalty to any religion that is unintegrated and possibly self-contradictory. In order to avoid at this point the very weakness that I have ascribed to our hill-top generalizations, let me show by an example how sincere piety can pull a man in opposite directions at once. In the typical common worship of Protestant churches, ancient words, phrases, and sentences are used in dislocation from both their ancient setting in experience and any modern setting in a specified situation or identifiable experience. The worshippers say things about God or to him that surely do not constitute unambiguous communication from anybody to anybody—not even to oneself. Hymns are addressed to God, Jesus, the church, the world at large, and oneself that, psychologically considered, are substantially nothing but modes of suggestion. Here is a process that dominates also advertising, war propaganda, political demagoguery, and multifarious solicitations to conduct both good and bad. What, then, is it towards which these hymns move men by suggestion rather than by deliberation? Some comfortable emotions are awakened, it is evident, but what is the bearing of these emotions upon the worshipper's character?

Usually the whole procedure is so ambiguous that it offers the same emotional reinforcement to men who are determinedly going in opposite directions. That is, it is a self-approving process. It is this even though it suggests restraint and includes a confession of sin. If we are going to inquire into the contribution of religion to personality de-

velopment we could hardly do better than ask in what respects personalities change through the public prayer of confession. What significant improvements can we assuredly trace to it? In any case we certainly trace it to some emotional refreshment and self-approval even though the quality of one's main enterprises remains unchanged. In short, Protestant worship (I refrain from discussing Roman Catholic worship simply because of lack of space) contains a dualism that may possibly hinder the integration of personality. Things are said that are not quite meant; resolutions are made that have no date or mode of fulfilment; gratifying emotions are awakened without a clear perception of what it is that gratifies; a refuge from actualities is provided for any who can flinch without realizing what they are doing.

Not only does "religion" make no contribution to character; we must not assume that a particular religion tends unequivocally towards any one sort of personality development. For every religion has a history; whatever dynamic it now wields is a resultant of jostling forces, past and present—let us not forget that the present also is included in history. A common name—Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Mormon—does not guarantee uniformity in either individual or social dynamics. The components of Roman Catholicism in the United States are enormously different from those in Mussolini's Italy; the connotation of Presbyterian is not the same on Fifth Avenue and in a southern village; Mormonism has its internal struggles just as other faiths do.

If this complicates some of our problems, it simplifies others. For it requires us to deal with each element of a complex by itself and with no halo about it. Our question is, "What is this particular motive-force, whether new or old, whether conscious or unconscious, doing to men?" I have said that "religion" does nothing to us; now I add that "a" religion does to us only what is done by the specific motive-forces that are sanctioned or tolerated by a group that bears a common name.

This dynamic point of view leads at last to the insight that human character molds our

religions as truly as they mold character. Divine beings, whether they are objects of love or of terror, invariably reflect something in human society that awakened these attitudes before they were attributed to gods. Just as a child does not clamor for candy until he has tasted candy, so any persuasiveness that a god may have (whether this god exists or is only imagined) is identical in quality with the persuasiveness that men exercise directly towards one another. When the character of a people undergoes a change from any cause whatever, the revised valuations tend toward revised conceptions of the divine character. The older ones among us should not forget that during the World War worship was

commonly addressed to a warring god, and that the reaction towards peace has produced a corresponding change in the assumptions of even conventional piety. That the attribution of high character to the object of worship can become an additional stimulus to the very men who make this attribution is not denied. The point is that the personality-forming force operates in both directions. Therefore a conference on "the contribution of religion to personality development" should not fail to consider at the same time the possible contributions of already-developed personalities to the religion of this or that group.

## VII

### 1939 - THE ASSAULT UPON LIBERALISM

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AN ENGLISH theologian of long ago remarked that there are two things that a Christian must know—he must know the true God and the true devil. Rollins College in its early days had a Department of Evil, with a Professor of Evil in charge. The purpose, supposedly, was that of defining alternatives where good and evil are entangled with each other.

Both liberalism and assaults upon it present such a tangle. In the sphere called economic, liberalism means either favoring freedom of contract and enterprise, or favoring restriction of this freedom in the interest of the propertyless man whom it makes unfree. In the political sphere liberalism means parliamentarism, yet parliamentarism is attacked upon the ground that it is an instrument of class dominance and therefore illiberal. Teachers who have intended to commit themselves to freedom in and through education have been having a difficult experience because their chosen prin-

ciples can imply either removing restraints from the individual, or enabling individuals to achieve common ends by acting together, or endowing personality as such with the economic power that is requisite for genuine initiative. In the academic world liberal culture means either non-vocational interests, or filling vocations with a new set of interests. In literature and other fine arts two kinds of freedom appear to be competing with each other—a freedom that would achieve the truth that is in beauty by withdrawing from social conflict, and a freedom that would achieve the truth in beauty by carrying the conflict to a satisfactory conclusion. In the realm of religion we witness theologians who in their youth experienced what they then regarded as a glorious emancipation from dogmatism into free criticism, now using this freedom to discredit the very thing that made them free.

What, then, is true God and what true devil in this which is called liberalism? We shall

not endeavor to compass the whole of this question, but only a phase of it that inheres in the academic tradition. There is something within the complex thing called liberalism without which learning and education as we know them would suffocate. Here is a value which, to the academic mind, is axiomatic; yet because the whole, of which it is a part, is under attack, we need to ask ourselves just what this axiom is, whether we have mistakenly associated it with vulnerable parts of the academic tradition, and how the valid element in our academic tradition is to be made socially effective in this changing society. The phrase "axiomatic value" is used deliberately. The controversy over liberalism concerns both facts and values, and the confusion referred to is a confusion with respect to both.

We shall approach this confusion, not by offering a definition of liberalism and then arguing about the qualities that it includes, but by citing events and human conduct that have involved the academic world in a particular issue with respect to freedom and with respect to the necessary technic of the free intellect. Within the memory of men now living the problem of freedom of the mind came to a new focus. The event registered itself indelibly in many academic institutions. Many of America's leading universities founded in the 19th century were still young when a process of re-birth set in. It was signaled by a bishop who, speaking in one eminent denominational college, warned the students against any professor who asserted that the Bible contained myths. At that time the only instruction in the Bible that the college offered its students was in the unofficial yet officially recognized classes of the Young Men's Christian Association. This instruction was saturated with dogmatism and opposition to historical criticism. In the adjacent theological seminary the historical criticism of the Old Testament was still struggling for a firm foothold, and New Testament criticism was only beginning to peep. Upon both campuses the evolutionary view of nature and of man was startling and fear inspiring to many students. The liberalism

that was developing in the university produced distrust in many of its patrons.

At this period, professors upon many campuses went through experiences that make some of the present assaults upon liberalism seem almost flippant. Permit a reference to some things that I witnessed when I was a student. I was born only three years after Darwin published his *Origin of Species*. When I was a college senior this book was still making the world tremble. The churches were seething, mostly with opposition, but partly with defence. My professor of zoology, Harrison Webster, a competent field biologist and a great teacher, had to tread warily in his teaching. He was wary, but never did he compromise, qualify, or omit anything that he regarded as truth about evolution. A later teacher of mine, Hinckly G. Mitchell, handled the Old Testament in the same spirit, being conciliatory towards conservatives, but daring to tell the historical truth. These men were typical liberals; Mitchell's liberalism cost him his professorship.

These were incidents in a general convulsion of world culture. The whole approach of man to nature, to human history, and to destiny came into question. The main issue was not the age of the rocks, nor the fact or method of organic evolution, nor the authorship of the Pentateuch. The main issue concerned the method of ascertaining truth in such matters, and supremely the presuppositions of science as method. Liberalism, in that day, was primarily an attitude towards truth and towards the scientific method of ascertaining it. Some of today's assaults upon liberalism touch the same point.

Occasionally an incautious critic says that empirical science has to do with material nature only, not with man, or not with personality; but for the most part the area of discontent is a set of attitudes and presuppositions; science as such is not directly opposed, but only the conditions under which it can do its work. If we were utterly imbued with the spirit of science, the distress that now grips the world would be taken as a challenge to be more scientific in our study

of man, of society, and of history. We should freely admit that there are deplorable gaps in the sciences, and that even things we have taken as science are illusory. We should betake ourselves to researches into the reasons why the new control of nature that science has put into human hands has not made larger contributions to human happiness. Not so those who most vigorously condemn liberalism. They jump directly from the woes of our time to an alleged incompetence of human nature.

Science by its presuppositions dignifies man. It assumes that we are capable of a self-discipline that restrains impulse and prejudice, suspends judgments and submits to evidence, listens with respect and friendliness to those who disagree with us, and re-directs ingrained habits. The spirit that is in the sciences assumes, further, that humanity may be trusted to learn, through its own experiments, its own successes and its own errors, to use as it will the enormous power over nature that research makes possible. The critics, however, whom I now have in mind are cold towards all this. Many a theologian is saying that our trouble is due to human depravity. They ascribe to us such an innate bent towards self-love, self-deception, narrowness, partisanship, and ruthless unreason, and such ethical helplessness as would make science impossible. Thus it is that what we have roughly designated as the assault upon liberalism is an attack upon the scientific movement at its most vital point, namely, the principles and presuppositions of method.

The assault involves a reversion to authoritarianism. We are told that because by nature we are depraved and foolish we must return to the authority of the church, which is assumed to be the authority of God himself. On the political side we are warned against the spirit that would re-examine the foundations of the state with a view to a possible reconstruction; instead, there is a demand for a new loyalty to the Constitution, and this great instrument of creative freedom, in spite of its own provision for amendment, is treated as a commandment

that is to be imposed forever upon the sons of men. In the sphere of morals, codes that represent conditions of life that no longer exist are insisted upon as eternally binding, and weakened respect for these codes is regarded as disintegration of character. Even in education there is a contest between those who would enfranchise the human capacity for social creativeness and those who would bind the rising generation to the present order.

For us in America the most portentous aspect of this reaction is the extent to which religious thought agrees with the leaders of fascism in denouncing liberalism and in affirming that the generality of mankind, lacking capacity for self-management, must be managed by an over-arching authority. Here is revealed a basic and inescapable conflict. In a culture that is consonant with the principles of the scientific movement, though authority in the sense of respect for work well done and for the doer of it will not be impaired, authoritarianism—the prescribing by some of what other men shall think—can claim no place. Roman Catholicism frankly meets the issue by retaining authoritarianism. The papacy censors the sciences and exempts itself from criticism. Protestantism, on the other hand, has shown considerable disposition to take up into itself the freedom and the objective methods of the cultural revolution. By distinguishing between values on the one hand, and processes of nature on the other, many Protestants and some Protestant bodies have found it possible to adhere whole-heartedly to the scientific revolution without losing their sense of continuity with the past of their faith. For such persons and bodies the ground of religious fellowship is values experienced and values aspired after, together with practical plans and conduct expressive thereof. At this point a cleft exists within Protestantism, a cleft that runs vertically through most of the larger communions. It is clearly represented in the movements towards a Christian unity. First, the longing for unity created a series of conferences on "Faith and Order;" that is, conferences that seek agreement upon authorita-

tive beliefs or dogmas, and upon an authoritative mode of ecclesiastical organization. The Edinburgh Conference in the summer of 1937 is the latest of this series. In contrast to this endeavor to unite Christendom upon an authoritarian basis, another and fundamentally different series of world conferences sprang up, the first being held at Stockholm. These were conferences on "life and work," and not on "faith and order." They sought to promote unity upon the basis of values, purposes, jobs to be undertaken, changes to be wrought in the world. The latest of these is the one held at Oxford in July, 1937; and it is not only the latest—it is the last. For Oxford has ended its labors by surrendering to Edinburgh. The resulting Utrecht meeting of a commission charged with formulating the terms for a fellowship of churches reverted to an utterly dogmatic and authoritarian test—only those bodies are to be admitted that accept Jesus Christ as God and Savior.

How far this anti-scientific reaction has spread within Protestantism we have no means of knowing. Probably the mass is more inclined to be inert, or to think about something else, than to take sides. The leaders of the reaction, however, are active and they are high-placed. It is conceivable that they might secure such influence over ecclesiastical officialdom as would make it possible to sway whole denominational masses. Certainly the Oxford Conference united intense religiousness with theological reaction. The dogma of depravity was treated almost as if it were the corner-stone of religious metaphysics. Not only was there deep dissatisfaction with the accomplishments of men in an era of expanding science, but the attribution of perversion to all of us was so unqualified as to freeze the heart out of endeavor. Authoritarianism was explicitly accepted, apparently without dissent. Oxford assumed that God has given into the custody of the church a body of truth that is to be transmitted rather than offered for examination. It is to be imposed upon both individuals and institutions. It is to be a presupposition of all education by whomsoever administered. It is to prescribe to the political

state the nature and the limits of its prerogatives. This can mean nothing less than that the ecclesiastics are to control other men without first consulting them; that in the broad and undefined area of religion and religious ethics we are not to sit down before the facts as a little child—to use Huxley's phrase—but rather that those who do patiently consult facts may be contradicted and flouted by those who do not. Such is the latest theological assault upon liberalism. It shows that some Protestant theologians do not realize from what a pit they have been digged. They employ, as if it were a matter of course, a freedom that was won at great cost; then they undermine it, deepening the religious confusion of the day, and bringing into question the rationality of the very faith that they would defend.

Early in this discussion it was pointed out that the controversies over liberalism concern both knowledge of facts and appreciation of values. Let us turn, now, to the valuational aspects of our problem. One of the criticisms of liberalism runs to the effect that liberty has been treated by the liberals as if it were separable from other values as if, whatever ups and downs might occur in other phases of human welfare, liberty could and should remain constant. In the economic sphere, freedom of contract and enterprise has been segregated in thought from the effects of exercising it—effects, on the one hand, upon those who lack the power to make favorable bargains, and on the other hand effects upon the personality of the successful bargainer and his children. In the political sphere, popular suffrage and free schools have been cherished; but because public education has not made the other problems of welfare its own, we are, on the whole, a politically illiterate people. Religious liberty, once achieved, was put into a safety-deposit box, with this consequence: Society has moved, almost unchallenged by religion, into a position that presents almost insuperable obstacles to creative religion. Academic freedom, likewise, has been treated as a thing apart from the struggles of the masses of humanity, and professors have



actually believed that they can defend their prerogatives without actually settling their individual account with the forces that make for suppression.

Here is a fascinating problem. Can we have liberty unless we have other things too? If not, what are these other things? At this point, as before, we must restrict ourselves to a single phase of our liberal academic tradition, namely, our unqualified loyalty to science as method. Critics allege that our loyalty to a method does not commit us to the substantive ends of life in which alone intellectual labor can find a fulfilled meaning. There is an enormous gap between the academic wealth of knowledge and the present widespread poverty of life—poverty both material and spiritual. What is knowledge for? Is the objective of science simply more science? If its objective is wider than this, just what kind of human world does science as such undertake to help us to build?

This criticism, in effect, is the direct opposite of that which appears in the current revival of authoritarianism. For now, instead of blaming men of science because they have overestimated their capacity, the critics imply that capacities have been left unused. Instead of reaction against freedom, here is demand for and a wider use of it. With criticism of this type, therefore, men of science might conceivably agree; yet we do not know how far they do agree with it. There appears to be no consensus concerning the relation of science as method to any other requisites of the good life.

Several approaches to this question have been made. An oblique approach is involved in the oft-heard remarks about the Victorian era. On the humane culture that had such a blossoming in that era, scientific enlightenment was an essential part of the sap, and freedom was its sunlight. But this culture required possessions and leisure; the cultivated individual could acquire his admired quality only by means of labor of other men who did not and could not share his privileges. Is science indifferent, then, to inequality of opportunity for knowledge and culture?

Another oblique approach starts with the fact that business and industrial corporations now employ staffs of researchers and inventors. As if science were a commodity, it has been inserted into the price system. A consequence is that research serves ends that have not been judged good in the full light of scientific analysis; the researcher who labors in the interest of profit-making serves two masters. And with a startling result. Where the control of the forces of nature has become the most extensive and most minute—that is, in the mightiest of industries—there, great masses of men though they are moved hither and thither for supposedly scientific reasons, are frustrated, unhappy, and sometimes unfed.

A third putting of the questions arises through the philosophy called instrumentalism. Knowledge, says the instrumentalist, exists because problems exist; problems arise when some kind of action is unsuccessful, impeded, or uncertain of its way; the meaning of any piece of knowledge does not fully appear until its origin in action and its bearing upon further action are revealed; the re-direction of conduct, accordingly, is an inherent function of science as such. This is a straightforward denial that science creates its own tasks or fulfills them by revolving upon its own subjective axis; Rather the tasks are created by feeling with common humanity; and they are fulfilled by working with common humanity. That there is a direct value in the satisfaction of curiosity is not denied, nor is it implied that all knowledge is to be weighed in utilitarian scales, but only that the intrinsic values of intelligence spring up, as beauty in domestic architecture springs up, in and through endeavors to live and to live well. I mention the instrumentalist philosophy, not to recommend it, but as a means of adding point to our question. Our inquiry, in fact, as we shall see, need not wait for the settlement of basic conflicts in the fields of metaphysics or theory or knowledge. What now confronts us is the question whether the often assumed neutrality of science in the present social conflict is a necessity of scientific purity, and indeed whether it is genuine

neutrality at all. Here is where the assault upon liberalism, alleging that even our academic liberalism has not been liberal enough, most touches the quick.

A distinction is required at once. Occasions arise when, if one subject is freely to be explored, silence upon some other subject is necessary. When the controversy over evolution was hot, many a department of science refrained from all references to religious questions that were involved. Here appeared to be neutrality, but it was only a temporary protective device. Sooner or later the methods of science were bound to penetrate the fields of the history of religion and the psychology of religion. When and how far such protective devices may be wisely employed we need not now inquire. Assume, if you must, that the social irritability of the present moment justifies silence upon the part of some men at some points; but let us not incontinently assume that science as such is or can be a disinterested spectator of the present human tragedy. Just as, by its very nature, science cannot be neutral with respect to control of thought by ecclesiastical dogma, so perhaps it cannot be neutral with respect to certain kinds of other social control that now struggle for the mastery of men. Possibly freedom of scientific inquiry, upon which all liberals insist, is inextricably bound up with other freedoms upon which some liberals do not insist.

There are five interlocking reasons for thinking this is so. *First*, science itself is an instance of social organization upon a specific principle. Truth is sought cooperatively; criticism is mutual; societies of men of science are as inevitable as the state itself, and a world-wide fellowship not only is implied, it already exists. It was not destroyed by the world war; the resumption of intercourse after the fighting ended was immediate, and it was as natural as a family reunion. An Austrian worker in the psychology of religion, for example, wrote to me at once requesting me to put him in touch with productions in this field that had been published during the period of non-intercourse. On behalf of my correspondent, I applied to numerous authors for complimentary copies

of such publications and not in a single instance was there the slightest reluctance to comply. Of course not! The principle of social organization actually in operation among men of science is not a class principle, but a classless one. Race, color, creed, wealth, and poverty, are simply not taken into account — except, indeed, when there is a slip in procedure. This is to say that in a sense of democracy far profounder than our so-called democratic constitutions, here we have actual practice of democracy. Science is the classless organization of human minds.

*Second*, wherever science is unrestricted, it affects values other than the merely cognitive ones. Men modify their valuations almost indefinitely when, maintaining the humility of the learner, they freely compare experiences and views. In particular, when I become vividly aware of the experience of another man, and of how he himself looks at it, when I see through both his eyes and mine too, as a man of science must do, one or another community of values comes to light, and the range of possible antagonism shrinks. Thus the process of knowing, is also at the same time a process of extending and multiplying, cooperatively, relations.

*Third*, when science is fully free it does not accept any restriction upon the range of subject-matter of its classless thinking. The assumption is that every kind of subject-matter and every mind whatsoever constitute the ideal wholeness of science. This does not imply that action must always be postponed until we can demonstrate what its results will be, least of all that analysis of facts can establish the validity of a scale of values; but it does imply that all our choices, all our faiths, all our philosophies are among other things events that have relations to other events. It implies also that potential in man is capacity, in spite of conflicts of apparent self-interest, for cooperation in open-eyed gazing at the course of events. The spirit of science will not be fully satisfied until all men and all bodies of men everywhere in the world have acquired the habit of conferring together as any scientific society now does, and upon any subject-matter whatsoever. The

social significance of their attitude is more penetrating than is commonly realized. Professor Laski quotes from a letter of Linquet, a French writer, to Voltaire the following words with respect to the workingman: "The condition of society condemns him to the use of his physical strength alone. Everything would be lost once he knows that he has a mind." (Laski, Harold J., *The Rise of Liberalism*, 1936, Page 251).

*Fourth*, though the field for possible research is the whole vast unknown, actual exploration is limited to selected areas of it. Some problems are recognized as more important than others. Let us ask, then, what makes anything important or unimportant for science when it acts freely from within itself. Only a part of the answer can here be given, namely, the part that most directly concerns the relation of the truly liberal mind to the general welfare of society. Does the genuinely liberal mind, by virtue of its commitment to empirical research, have any social orientation? Certain it is that the expert researcher often discovers his problem by listening to laymen. The cry of the sick is an example. Here research acquires its importance from an assumption that men as such are important. This, in fact, is one of the intrinsic qualities of the scientific movement. The man of science is a man among men; he is not a mere computing machine, indifferent to everything but accuracy. If one happens to be employed to promote the interests of one competitor against another in business, there an adventitious motive mingles with an intrinsic one. Looked at in the large, the desire of science to be able to predict events is inseparable from the desire that the life of mankind should be less precarious. To reduce the extent of human helplessness in the presence of both natural and historical forces—this is an intrinsic ground for the selection of problems. Thus, men of science act in representative capacity; they are agents through whom the race of men endeavors to become free. Science does not yield to an extrinsic motive when it listens to the cry of today's masses for liberation from economic and political re-

pression. Rather, between truly liberal learning and the thirst of the common people there is an inner affinity. Science as such is against class rule.

*Fifth*, that science as such has a social orientation is revealed likewise in the struggle over academic freedom. There are two main sources of restriction. One is ecclesiastical. The tendency to restrict is inherent in any religious body based upon an authoritarian principle. The supreme instance of this is, of course, the Roman Catholic hierarchy. This church assumes not only that it has a divine message for all the world, but also that its own mode of self-government is that of absolute monarchy—to the Pope is ascribed infallibility. The meeting between the papacy and Italian fascism is not an encounter between two completely hostile social philosophies, therefore, but between philosophies that can understand and sympathize with each other. They are alike in denying complete freedom to science, alike in exercising an overhead control of teaching in universities, and they are alike in their reason for doing it. The reason is that science has an inner affinity for self-rule by the people.

The other main source of restriction can easily be recognized in the present struggle for academic freedom in the United States. The danger to university professors and to teachers in our high schools does not grow out of errors in their apprehension of facts, nor out of errors in their inferences from facts. The attack never specifies such errors in their inferences from facts. The real question in this struggle is not "Where does truth lie?" but "Where shall Power reside?" Science is not an instrument that can be used indifferently and equally by both parties in the present struggle for power. The distrust of academic freedom grows out of an at least dim apprehension of the truth that truly liberal learning is inexorably tied up with the movement to end special privileges.

The conclusion is that the assault upon liberalism, as far as our academic tradition is affected by it, is to be met partly by quietly going on with our work, partly by defending the liberty that is our life, but also partly, and

most of all, by developing the valuations that are implicit in our standards. The usefulness of nineteenth-century protective devices is about over; today liberty cannot be protected by silence about anything. Our public school cannot now secure peace by avoiding controversial issues. Indeed, we cannot save what we have without claiming more. Liberalism in education is and increasingly

will be, engaged in the redistribution of power in society. A day is approaching when a socially colorless professor or high-school teacher will be little more than a piece of social driftwood drying upon the sands of receding time; and the converse of this is that a day is dawning in which, in a sense not dreamed of by Bacon, knowledge will be power.

## VIII

### 1940 - THE CRUX OF OUR PROBLEM

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RELIGIOUS thought has given more attention to the motive of democracy than to the democratic process. If we fix our attention upon the process, we may find there illumination that contemplation of the motive alone cannot discover. Respect for personality, or recognition of the worth of a man as such is the something within us that requires action or process, but it is not the process itself. It must be evident to all of us that the required process also is psychical. That it is not a process of emotion should be evident from the fact that every sort of social emotion is found in, and most sorts are evoked by, regimes that are anti-democratic.

Democracy is, rather, a way of what is popularly called "making up our minds." It has to do with the cognitive process and the cognitive function. Democracy is a pooling of the cognitive resources of two or more persons. It is not merely the accumulating of like opinions, for it invites the challenging of all opinions. Rather, it is a cooperative endeavor after objectivity, and a conjoint handling of our ignorance and our disagreements. It includes the cooperative attainment of convictions; suspension of judgment, likewise cooperatively achieved; the putting of what we cooperatively think into cooperative action, and likewise coopera-

tive postponement of action that may be desired by some or even all of the participants.

This does not make of it a merely intellectual exercise stripped of emotion, for the process is favored by and is favorable to some kinds of emotion, and always it is suffused with value judgments either explicit or implicit. Democracy is cooperative cognition engaged in the performance of its functions in the maintenance and the enhancement of life. It is, of course, inseparable from bodily activity. If there were any where such a thing as pure contemplation disengaged from muscles in interaction with environment, it would be no concern of democracy. The cooperative cognition now in question is a way of controlling both our muscles and our environment. That is, the pooling of our cognitive resources is at the same time a pooling of the power that knowledge brings.

Modern science is at this moment confronted by the question whether it will go the whole way with the cognitive function within which it works. By creating information it creates power. Its method of creating information is democratic, and at some points the power that it creates is directly democratized, as in the medical sciences; but in the main a notion prevails among men of science that their work is done

when they have accumulated information. In this they are not completely consistent, for some of the power that they create is guided by them toward the securing of funds for new researches. It is a simple fact that the performance of the cognitive function, even though fragmentarily, includes more or less transformation of ordinary experience. When science is fully democratized, it will include within itself an extension of its own cooperative attitude into the handling of all the power that science creates.

Democracy is a kind of control then; but it is a self-limiting kind. It guides, restrains and hinders, coordinates, coerces, but with self-created restrictions. These restrictions exist because the basis of cooperation is cognitive, not emotional. When an all-controlling emotion unifies men, it jellifies their minds; for the time being no lumps of individuality have to be reckoned with. But cooperative thinking is *per se* a call to action as an individual. Here we come upon the paradox of democracy. What is most individual and what is super-individual are sought and found at one and the same point.

Cooperative thinking liberates the persons who do it. It liberates them from a kind of social control in which they have a less personal part into a kind of social control in which they have a more personal part. The idea that social bonds exist only through the giving up of freedom is psychologically fallacious. Social bonds of some kind always are there. Persons are inter-personal; there is no other way to be a person. For the most part this inherent bond takes active form in such processes as imitation, custom, common opinion and prejudice. Much of its operation is substantially automatic, but much of it also is manipulated by persons who control us without our consent. "Who makes up my mind?" is a real question for social psychology.

Democracy is the only way of escape from his subservience. It is the only way because I am always a prejudiced witness as to my own social involvements. No self-examination in isolation from my fellows can bring me to the truth about myself. They can see

in me what I cannot. I must humble myself by consenting to look at myself through their eyes. Yet this is a kind of humility that exalts me.

That is placing of democracy under the category of cognition directly illumines some of the most critical situations in religious education is what I now hope to show. I begin with an American phase of the current contest over religious liberty. All our American religions desire liberty, though they do not fully agree as to what it is. Political democracy also desires it even though no other religious obligation be officially acknowledged. Why does democracy require religious liberty? On the ground that the value that is in each personal self is not a permitted value, but a recognized value, and that it has to be presupposed if we are to think cooperatively. Therefore persons as such are taken as sacred. Here religion and democracy stand upon common ground, and a restriction is placed upon the state. We shall understand this restriction only when we perceive that it is necessary in order to keep the cognitive function going. The Macintosh case illustrates the point so well that a rather extended analysis of it may be permitted.

When Professor Macintosh applied for naturalization he was asked whether he would bear arms for the United States. He replied that he would do so in some kinds of war, but that he would first have to be convinced that the war in question was in accordance with the divine will, which he put above all human wills. Because of this answer his application was denied, and the denial of it was sustained by the Supreme Court of the United States in a majority decision. A dissenting opinion was written by Mr. Justice Hughes, now our Chief Justice. A comparison of the majority opinion with the minority opinion brings out the issue sharply. The majority reasoned that, indeed, obedience is due to God, but that "the government must go forward upon the assumption . . . that unqualified allegiance to the nation and submission and obedience to the laws of the land . . . are not inconsistent with the will



of God." Note that these words concern a way of knowing; the decision concerns cognition. The opinion asserts, in substance, that when the Congress declares war it makes known, in a manner final for every citizen, something with respect to the will of God.

Mr. Hughes, in a vigorous dissenting opinion, reasoned that the majority of the court here made allegiance to God subordinate to allegiance to the state, and that this is "directly opposed to the spirit of our institutions and to the historic practice of the Congress." The supremacy of conscience within its proper field is one of our most precious traditions. "What this field is, under our system of government," he goes on, "presents in part a question of constitutional law and also in part one of legislative policy in avoiding unnecessary clashes with the dictates of conscience." Note the reasoning: The Supreme Court should recognize an allegiance superior to that of the state, but our laws do not make a formal definition of its scope.

The majority opinion ascribes to the state the very kind of authority to which Americans object when it is exercised by governments that are called totalitarian. There religion lives by permission; such freedom as it has is created by law, whereas here our tradition makes religious liberty a presupposition of law. The *raison d'être* may be put in a homely way as follows: The neighbors whom we send to Washington as our representatives are men like ourselves, not gods. They make mistakes, just as you and I do. They and we need to keep ourselves forever ready for further thinking upon any question of public policy. If there is any meaning whatever in the phrase "the will of God," it means at least that every thought and act of a man is properly subject to reconsideration, the door to which never should be shut.

The Macintosh decision is not an isolated incident. Other naturalization cases have been closed in the same way, and court opinions expressed in these cases have been used as precedents in the handling of conscientious objectors to compulsory military drill in a state university. In the Hamilton case the opinion of the Court, written by Mr.

Justice Butler, relies in part upon opinions in the Macintosh and Schwimmer cases. It is not remarkable that Mr. Butler, who was generally regarded as being socially reactionary, should so reason, but it is noteworthy, likewise portentous, that the decision in this instance was unanimous, and that even Mr. Hughes took no exception to the reasoning of Mr. Butler. It appears, therefore, that the political philosophy that dictated the Macintosh decision is gaining power. Religious liberty, and freedom of conscience in general, are not secure.

By a different process our civil liberties also have come increasingly into jeopardy. Freedom of speech, press, and assemblage means that the conditions for action as a person are securely established — that is, that opportunity for cooperative thinking is to be permanent. Civil liberties and religious liberty have a common basis; all of them are ways whereby we cooperatively protect ourselves from our own errors by keeping open what Lowell calls "the soul's east window of divine surprise."

What has organized religion done with respect to the growing insecurity of our liberties? Apart from a few sporadic criticisms and individual outcries, apparently nothing. In view of the fact that in none of the court cases in which religious liberty was involved was religion itself represented by counsel, and in view of what seemed to me to be an inadequate presentation of the issue, a circular letter was sent to outstanding leaders of a considerable number of religious bodies suggesting that a time had arrived when effective protection of religious liberty required the employment by cooperating churches of the most eminent available legal talent; that in cases like that of Macintosh and Hamilton a thoroughly equipped attorney should intervene as a friend of the court, and that only in this way could there be any assurance that the full import of the issue ever would occur to the mind of the court. The responses to this circular letter accepted its point of view, but they indicated that the suggested action did not fall within the scope of any church department, organ, or budget, and — what may be still

more significant—that no provision for initiative in such public matters then existed. May I renew, here and now, the suggestion that was made in this futile circular letter?

The bearing of this matter upon religious education is direct. If the churches and synagogues should organize their resources for active struggle in this field, how much more pointed, how much more thrilling the teaching of religion would become; and—doubt it not—these organizations would achieve a victory that would resound through the souls of both the old and the young.

A second point at which recognition of the cognitive nature of the democratic process can yield us practical help is the interest of religion in economic democracy. Most of the approaches of religious education to the main economic problem pursue a method that is ineffective. It consists in inviting young people and adults to choose one among a set of alternatives designated as communism, fascism, socialism, and capitalism—to choose, that is, a generalization, and to do it, on the whole, as isolated individuals. A better method would be to choose some concrete good and to do this by cooperative recognition of it as good.

Suppose that a group of us who are in this room should ask what material goods we really want—we! To person after person in the professional classes I have put the following question: "If you had a secure income sufficient to provide a cultivated but simple family life, to educate your children, and to provide you with conditions for doing your very best in your daily work, wouldn't this be enough? Would you really care to accumulate property?" Without an exception the reply has been that opportunity and security would be enough, and that accumulation could be dispensed with. Cooperative analysis of our wants is one of the surest ways to bring about the democratization of our wants.

An old story tells that a lady who was calling at a slum home in the interest of social service asked the housewife, "Does your husband drink?" The reply was, "Yes. Does yours?" The next question was, "Has your husband a job?" and the reply was, "Yes.

Has yours?" Then came, "How much does your husband earn a week?" and a part of the answer was, "How much does your husband earn?" The point of this story is that the slum dweller undertook to practice co-operative thinking, whereas religionists, as a rule, endeavor to think *for* the slum dweller, or the working man, or the unemployed man, instead of thinking *with* him. Remember that thinking with him is two-way thinking, and consider whether there is any other way in which we of the privileged classes can find out what we ourselves really want.

Again the educational application is direct. Is not finding out what we want a vital part of religious education? Is not the cooperative finding out of what we want just about the core of religious education for democracy? And, can you conceive of anything that would more vitalize a church school than just this?

Much more needs to be said upon this point, but there is time for only a hint. What is the effect of teaching broad social generalizations as ideals? Such generalizations are sprinkled through the history of religion, and religious education today highlights them as though a generalization could generate a general motive applicable to unknown particulars and strong enough to control them when they become known. But alongside these shiny generalities there is and always has been a multitude of unlighted and unnamed ways whereby religious persons deal with these particulars. These unlighted ways, the actual habits that prevail in the religious community, are being transmitted by religious education together with ideals which tend to become mere wishes, incapable of recognizing their own futility. The way out of this is the democratic way. It is the cooperative cognitive process applied to concrete situations in which we and the disinherited are alike implicated. We cannot think down to them from the height of a generalized wish, but we can think up with them from experiences mutually recognized as actual. In this process both we and they will become religiously educated.

The third point at which guidance can be secured directly from the truth that a cogni-

tive function is at the core of democracy is the treatment of religion by the public schools. It is well to approach this question with appreciation of the extent to which the schools already recognize and reinforce some religious phases of our culture. They do it by the simple but effective process of taking religion for granted; also by fostering kinds of conduct that religion also fosters, not seldom quoting specifically religious formulas for it, as the law of love; likewise by co-operating in religious festivals and not least by developing tolerance and attachment to the principle of religious liberty. The public schools are one of the main supports for some of the best qualities of religion in America.

In some schools the recognition of religion is explicit. I once examined a set of high-school student workbooks that recorded an endeavor to understand the social institutions of a community. Here were maps upon which schools, libraries, museums, social settlements, and churches were indicated, and here were the students' own reports of what these institutions severally seemed to be doing for the community. This approach to religion is so natural and so democratic in spirit that one wonders why the churches do not ask to have it adopted throughout the country. It certainly is true that as long as the schools lack liberty to explore any major phase of our culture they cannot produce a rounded understanding of civilization.

An educational system that is fully democratized would bring every major factor of culture, religion included, under one and the same sort of scrutiny. This would not violate our constitutional principle of the separation of the church from the taxing power; indeed, a fully democratic handling of religion along with the other phases of civilization would be the exact opposite of sectarianism and church control.

The obstacle to such democratic handling of religion by the schools of the state has not been created by the state nor by the school; it has come into existence through a historic process that envelopes the state, the school, and the church alike. What concerns us at

this moment is to identify the form this obstacle takes at the present stage of our own history. Why is it not practicable for the public schools to deal with the cultural wealth that bears the name "religion" just as they deal with the cultural wealth that bears the name "our country"? The answer is that we fall into difficulty when we endeavor to perform the cognitive function in the same way with respect to the two kinds of cultural wealth. On the political side of our culture we practice free discussion as the way of "making up" our minds, and free discussion by pupils is practiced in the teaching of citizenship. The schools cannot treat religion in the same way because the religions have other methods of "making up" minds.

In order to appreciate our situation, it is important to note that only recently have the schools adopted as a definite policy the democratic process of cooperative discrimination, reflection, and judgment with respect to "our country." Even yet patriotism is treated often as an indiscriminating emotional attachment. In order to make it a reflective attachment, which is more profound, civic education has begun to open to pupils both the virtues and the faults of our as yet only partially attained political democracy. The teacher proceeds upon the assumption that silence concerning our national deficiencies does not promote loyalty.

It is to be presumed that every discerning lover of democracy would like to have the schools free to reveal the exact social significance of the religious factor in our culture. But we have to bow to historically-rooted conditions. One of these conditions is that there is no such thing as religion in general; another is that religion in particular always is faulty; and a third condition is that each religion wants to deal with its virtues and its faults in its own way.

In short, our culture itself is internally divided. It is, in fact, so divided that public school endeavors toward cultural unity by teaching religion are more likely to exacerbate our trouble than to alleviate it. Education that is completely honest and completely democratic cannot produce positive appre-

ciation of what is good in our religions without producing also negative appreciation of what is not good.

A suggestion has been made that the public school should reinforce good conduct by adding a divine sanction; pupils should be assured that this or that is the will of God, just as now they are told that this or that is a law of the land, or that this or that is what being a good neighbor requires. But, if pupils should ask, "Which God?" or, "What is God like?" the teacher would be forced by pedagogical decency to enter the field of religious differences, controversy, and doubt. Our chief religions do not agree as to the nature of God, and there are more religions than the chief ones. The term "God" is not self-explanatory. Inquiry with respect to it is necessary. But the religions themselves forbid the schools to conduct such inquiry. The difficulty falls under the head of the cognitive function.

Are we, perhaps, in danger of demanding too much from the public schools because we are not sufficiently on guard against tendencies towards political totalitarianism? A true historical and social perspective reveals the state not as identical with society, not as the creator of society, but as one of the instruments of society. Society itself is primordial, and it is the ever-living source of the energy that creates and re-creates the political order. The state as an agent of society, does a part of the work of education.

Parents do another part, and our Supreme Court has ruled that their part is not subordinate to, but coordinate with, that of the state. Similarly many voluntary organizations take part in both transmitting and modifying the ways of society that we call culture.

Democracy is not a finished prescription, to be administered in its totality at some period of history. It is not invented; it springs spontaneously from the depths of social experience. In its growth it envelopes as an atmosphere many persons who do not realize what is happening to them. It penetrates religious institutions as well as the state, making their conduct at first inconsistent with itself. The state may not—it cannot—prescribe democracy to religion; instead, it must wait for internal growth to do its work, meantime promoting tolerance and good will among the variant elements in society.

This promotion of tolerance and good will constitutes of itself an enormous contribution to religion. Here is a religious function that only the state can perform for the entire populace. By abstaining from what is called teaching religion, the state actually makes our religions more religious! Further, what is the reverence for persons that suffuses and inspires the schools?

Is it a piece of "secularism?" Or, is it the breath of religion itself? Some citizens think that God himself is manifested in history wherever men grow in reverence for persons.

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## IX

### 1951 - EUTHANASIA? THE ISSUE'S CORE

*The Churchman*, Feb. 15, 1951

THE EMOTIONS that "mercy killings" awaken are too precipitate to furnish guidance for either physician, legislator, clergyman, or layman. There is need for a calm, analytical approach to both facts and principles.

What is probably the most explicit public pronouncement that puts facts and principles into a single perspective is a petition to the Legislature of the State of New York to which 379 Protestant and Jewish ministers affixed their name. These ministers recite how they have witnessed not only the suffering of patients who are beyond cure, but also degradation and disintegration of personality through the prolonging of existence by the administration of deadening drugs. The petition asks for legislation that would make it possible for an incurable sufferer who desires to die to accomplish his wish under legal controls that rigidly exclude chicanery, error, and undue haste. This petition is part of a movement initiated by the Euthanasia Society of America, Inc., and publicly approved by several thousand physicians and numerous citizens in other walks of life.

The proposed law makes an ethical assumption, namely, that under some circumstances a human being is entitled to participate in determining the time and manner of his death. This is the spearpoint of the whole euthanasia movement. Is there any such thing as a right to die? The term "right" is here used as the Declaration of Independence and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights use it. These instruments assume that rights may exist before they are declared, even before they are recognized. The growth of civilization consists partly in bringing such rights to clarity. Another way of saying this is that the worth and dignity of personality come to consciousness gradually and unevenly. Is the present agitation over so-called "mercy

killings" an instance of an unperceived or obscurely felt right that is struggling towards the surface of consciousness? This is the question to which this essay is addressed.

The belief that there can be a right to die is by no means entirely new even within Christianity. Many early Christians so esteemed martyrdom that they deliberately put themselves in the way of dying in the arena. This was an aberration, of course, but its starting point was the truth that for Christians there is no such rule as "safety first." Missionaries deliberately risk their lives in savage or disease-infested regions. Any medical researcher into a deadly disease, knowing right well the peril to himself, becomes everybody's hero if he is fatally overtaken. Almost daily Christians applaud someone for sacrificing his own life in order that another may be saved from suffering or death. The former dean of St. Paul's in London, Dr. Inge, has all this historical ground under his feet when he defends voluntary euthanasia.

If, now, I have a right to give up my life in order to save another from suffering, how can I be denied a right to give up my own life in order to save myself from suffering? "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" requires me to love myself as much as I love my neighbor. Thus near have we been from the time of Jesus to an answer to the main ethical question that is raised by the movement for euthanasia. In another way also, we have lived close to the question. For, in general, a right carries in its bosom an alternative to its own affirmative exercise. Freedom of speech includes a right to be silent. The right of assembly includes a right to remain at home. The right to pursue happiness includes a right to be a pessimist. Is the right to life an exception in that it includes no freedom of choice? Does owning a house obligate me to occupy it? Does



ability to eat carry within itself a duty to continue to eat as long as possible?

But is not voluntary euthanasia a kind of suicide, and is not suicide a species of murder? Here are two questions, not merely one. Voluntary euthanasia is suicide in *one* of the *dictionary* senses of this word. But to identify it with murder is at least hasty. Suicide has a history that bears upon this question. Especially significant is a portion of its history that begins in the eleventh century, when official Christianity and the political state did their united best to validate an Augustinian dictum that all self-killing is murder. Suicide became the most heinous form of murder. The body of the unfortunate was not only denied burial in consecrated ground; it was mutilated, dragged through the streets, hanged, and finally buried after dark with a stake driven through it into the ground in order to prevent the ghost from walking abroad. With the decline of ghost beliefs the revulsion against suicide moderated, the moral consciousness became more humane, and so did ecclesiastical practice. The indignities done to the body ceased; burial in daylight became permissible, and so did religious rites at the funeral. Instead of mere scorn for the mental and emotional processes that lead men to suicide, there began what has become a general habit of taking them into consideration.

It is true that the old crude contempt for the dead was succeeded in our part of the world by an attitude that, though it was more nearly polite, was only less cruel. It assumed that all suicide is cowardly, selfish, and an evasion of responsibility. But this also is now passing away. It evaporates in the presence of suicide by high-minded persons in the interest of their families, of which there have been many instances, and in the presence of relatives who admire while they mourn. That this growth of considerateness is becoming a national characteristic is indicated by the fact that when George Eastman died by his own hand the public reaction was that of sorrow, amazement and puzzlement, but not of blame. Carl Sand-

burg's massed evidence that the act was intended to be, and actually was in the public interest appears to stand unchallenged (Carl Sandburg, *The People*, Yes. New York, 1936, pp. 7f.).

It appears, therefore, that when conscience, rising above superstitious fear, grows reflectively humane and profoundly respectful of personality, it makes room for possible participation in determining the time and manner of one's departure. A human right is coming towards the light. *Towards* the light; just now we are in chaos. The legal situation can be epitomized by the fact that, though the State of New York makes aiding and abetting suicide a crime, a grand jury refused to indict Frederick Berwick, though he admitted that he helped a friend to a weapon with which to end the pain of cancer (related in a United Press dispatch from New York, April 25, 1949). There is medical chaos. Physicians cannot fulfill their function of reducing suffering unless they break the law by "boodlegging" lethal potions, as some of them do. (That some missionary physicians give lethal potions has been asserted in my presence by an acquaintance of these physicians). There is religious chaos. A minister may not hand the communion cup to a parishioner, however devout, at the moment of his voluntary departure from what is ambiguously called "life." A pastor may not lead the family from darkness into light by advising that the dictates of a loving heart should be followed. Domestic love is frustrated. Children growing up in the shadow of this frustration are becoming permanently warped.

What can bring an end to this chaos? Human love! The kind of love that, transcending pity, includes justice to personality. This kind of love "never faileth." It may make mistakes; it may have to outgrow some of its habits; it never reaches the end of its journey; but it never gets quite out of breath, never quits its job, never surrenders an inch of territory. Love will yet have its way with incurable sufferers.

## X

### 1951 - MY SEARCH FOR WHAT IS MOST WORTHWHILE

*Religious Education*, March-April 1951

FOR WHAT is "most" worthwhile. Many things are worthwhile that are not "most." Life has introduced me to a vast range and variety of agreeable experiences that seem to be reasonable. I am not an ascetic. Nothing that I am about to say belittles the daily round or the satisfaction of simply occupying a place among my fellows. But I have discerned what seem to be ultimate values — ultimate in the sense that they are sufficient in and of themselves to be reasonable motives for conduct. I desire to identify and list such ultimates.

My interest in so doing was partly expressed in an essay, "My Own Little Theatre," nearly a quarter of a century ago. It was printed in *Religion in Transition*, a book of composite authorship edited by Vergilius Ferm (London, 1937). Other phases of my search can be inferred from my intensive treatment of personality in *What Is Christian Education?* (New York, 1935).

In these productions, and indeed from my student days till now, my dominant ethical interest has concerned the nature, the functions, and the setting within the natural order of the human personality. From the first, however, my approach was less through logical reflection than through decisions made when I had occasion to choose among competing values. This has involved the conscious acceptance of risks; I have taken as valid some things that as yet are beyond proof. I have enjoyed quoting to myself Goethe's "*I'm Anfang War Die That.*"

Nevertheless, in my youth I rather inconsistently endeavored to express to myself the meaning of my own personal selfhood by noting the isms that I accepted and rejected. As my years advanced I did so less and less. This does not signify a tendency to go over

to any of the cults of irrationalism, but rather that no ism, whether it be philosophical or theological, means *me* or *you*. In each of us there is an overplus of all isms. It can be detected even in the conduct of theologians and philosophers, whatever be their views of the universe. Their choices are not mere applications of what they regard as proved or probable. Personality, in spite of the fact that it is partly problematical and partly subjected to hazards that it cannot endorse, goes on asserting by the functions it performs that it has in itself a validity that does not require proof. I am far from assenting to any of the traditional mystical philosophies which also affirm insights that are beyond proof, but some *activities* of some mystics do seem actually to leave all isms behind. A specimen of such activities will be mentioned in a later paragraph.

This overplus in myself I recognize in leanings that are not the same as ideas or logical demands — leanings that repeat themselves, not growing old, time-worn, nor even commonplace. I take this to indicate that something *there* in the direction towards which I lean furnishes permanent support. This permanent support is directly related to the fact that personality is inherently interpersonal. I never become a mere individual. My thoughts, my desires, even my wilfulness are part expressions in me of the groups, large and small — domestic, political, economic, religious, etc. — within or among which I have lived. In order to know myself, then, I must look outward as well as inward, and my leanings can be mine only when they are more than spurts of arbitrariness. Indeed, I conduct myself most distinctly as a person, and my leanings have in them the most of this element of apparent

response, when I am least arbitrary, least impetuous, most inclined to pause and look around me.

I recognize personality in another by noting signs that he not only has experiences, but also weighs them. A person might be described generally as a "confronter." When he is most himself he faces around towards the society whence he derives his culture; he faces around towards nature, whence his every breath and heart-beat proceed; he faces around towards the totality of being, which is called the universe. A person is not a "yes-man." Not that dissent is the core of personality, but that inquiry is at the core.

### I

A large part of the significance of personality has come to light in great questioners who, unrestrained and unafraid, look and see; follow evidence whithersoever it may lead; subordinate so-called personal interest to the truth, and by cooperation of mind with mind create science, which is democracy of the intellect. I no more ascribe sainthood to the man of science than I ascribe competent question-asking to the saint. But, in the victory of scientific method over its opponents I perceive a great jump in the recognizable value of a man.

### II

The significance of personality comes to light through philosophy also. I refer, not to anything that philosophy establishes by logical processes, but to the act of confronting the universe with questions that one's own mind has competently wrought out. This act illumines the inherent dignity of man, whatever be the answers at which the philosopher arrives. I have witnessed the scrupulousness with which two associations of scholars—one an association of men of science, the other an association of philosophers—guard the right to ask questions. Each of the associations was aroused to a high pitch by the treatment a member had suffered because his conclusions were distasteful. But neither association defended the conclusion nor the reasonings of its members; rather, each association defended the right to ask questions. On an other occa-

sion, when some professors in a great university had brought criticism upon the university itself, I heard the head of it say substantially this: "Some teachers in the university of which I am the head hold ideas and say things that I abominate, but they have a right to think them and to say them!" Obviously, the right here involved did not depend upon the correctness of a conclusion, but upon the inherent worthwhileness of asking important questions.

Theology asks much the same questions as philosophy, but after a fashion of its own. This fashion concerns both the way of arriving at questions, and the way of seeking answers for them. Both these points can be illustrated by a conversation I had some thirty or more years ago with one of the most distinguished theologians of my generation. I remarked that his theology seemed to be substantially the same as a philosophy of religion. He hotly maintained the contrary. He regarded theology as a self-sustained unfolding of truth that already has been grasped by one religion. Now, anyone who strictly follows this pattern subjects himself to a temptation to slight the context of the questions that he asked. Here is an example: The non-Christian religions began to receive a reasonable amount of attention in the theological seminaries less than a hundred years ago. In the next place, a mode of inquiry that starts with an assumption that one religion already has grasped the truth plants an answer within what has the form of a question. This perceived when I was a young student of theology. See *Religion in Transition*, 97f.

Nevertheless, in theology, as in philosophy, the worth and dignity of personality have stood out in the act of inquiry. For increasingly theologians, sometimes to their cost, treat this or that dogma with freedom, and not a few theologians seem to forget entirely the authoritarianism that gave their occupation its name. Here is the very process of self-realization and self-fulfilment. To no small extent, moreover, the problems of the philosopher have been set for him by the theologian, and what holds philosophy to the grindstone is largely a kind of religious

longing. The main contribution to our insight into the meaning of personality that comes from these two related quarters comes directly from the act of inquiry — the act of looking the universe squarely in the face without cringing.

Do I actually hold that a procedure that may and sometimes does lead to denial of the existence of God can illumine the dignity and worth of man? I do. Inquiry into ultimates is one of the things that are most worthwhile. Religion speaks correctly of *faith* in God, for in logic the matter is hypothetical, as I have indicated in *What Is Christian Education?*, 288. If we are not hospitable to inquiry and inquirers, hospitable also to all evidence against as well as for, how can we say that we share Jesus' unreserved belief in the worth of a man? Moreover, one might well ask whether we could reverence a God who was averse to having us sturdily inquire whether he exists — sturdily inquire, not as courtiers who must curry favor.

### III

In the next place, those among us who, by research and invention, transmute some energy of nature into power that can be controlled by persons for ends that are determined by persons exhibit another of the most worthwhile kinds of personal action. Even "gadgets" do not deserve the contempt in which some persons profess to hold them. As for the already achieved major controls of natural forces, particularly in the field of medicine, who can contemplate them without such reverence for man as the Eighth Psalm puts into its great anthem? Activities of human beings are transmuting the very meaning of "nature." The occupations of nature are shifting before our very eyes. Nature does the family washing; it produces hybrid corn and seedless oranges; it manufactures "appliances"; it carries men and goods across continents and seas, and through the stratosphere; it whispers the news in a closed room, and the whole world hears; it multiplies beauty through new varieties of roses. In the field of therapeutics the occupations of nature today are of kinds undreamed of when the phrase *vis medicatrix naturae* was

coined, and they work effects equally undreamed of then. These are specimens only, a partial index of a vast mass of transmutations of natural energy into usable power. Moreover, the scientific imagination looks expectantly for immeasurably greater transmutations than these. At all these points it is the human personality that bestows upon nature a new competence.

### IV

In artists, likewise in the common enjoyment of the fine arts, I glimpse another aspect of what it is to be a person. When I have looked upon men, women, and children of New York City's working classes flowing in great streams through the galleries of the Metropolitan Museum on some holiday, I have lifted up my eyes towards the human personality as such. There is much in the fine arts of which I am unsure, though the art critic need not be. But competency as a critic is not a prerequisite to perceiving that the arts seem to add a new dimension to personality. They open the eyes of the mind; they enlarge the scope of the emotions; they make the world more interesting, and they make one's self more interesting to oneself. Of course what happens is that capacities already there are brought into action and to notice. It is known that children often experience esthetic glow and exaltation by merely observing closely something in nature or in man that is entirely ordinary. A similar experience is common among nature lovers, even those who are lovers also of scientific precision; it occurs among mathematicians and logicians who find beauty in the abstract objects of their daily study. The general failure of educational institutions to introduce students to the beauty in mathematics is one of the near-tragedies in education.

That such esthetic experience is more than a species of enjoyment, even a kind of realization of something deeply real in ourselves and in the universe about us, is an old doctrine. There is something in it. Out of mere fiddles there springs chamber music!

### V

In the religious prophet I perceive further

light upon my problems. Its rays are parallel to those that radiate from the great questioners who have been described. My main reason for naming the prophet is not my admiration for sympathy, clarity or moral insight, and courage, but the fact that he promotes the decay of ethically uncritical piety. This includes the exposure, as by the 8th Century prophets of Israel, of ethically uncritical worship, and a summons to a more religious religion. Rarely is the nature of this contribution to real living fully understood. Religion, of its very nature, requires prophets. For the clan that religions display at their outset lessens automatically and not improperly until it is spent; whereupon, — improperly, now — the instrumentalities and institutions of religion offer themselves as religion. What arouses the prophet is their lack of ethical sensitivity. He can recall religion to its better self only by exposing and opposing the piety of his time and his people. He has to be a troubler of Israel, a disturber of the church. But in his personality, and in the tombs that ultimately are erected in his honor, there is a glimmering of the truth that, if we are to be adequately personal, we must not be mere receptacles into which ultimate values are poured; we must ourselves be fountains of ultimate values.

The prophet discredits particular kinds of conduct, not human nature. He is so far from doing so that an everpresent implication of his message is that human beings can right their own bad conduct. Prophetism has no affinity with the doctrine of natural depravity; its affinity is with rigorous inquiry, in our time with sociological inquiry. That we come to ourselves partly by now and then reversing ourselves is a fact, however. Repentance is a normal aspect of personal growth — repentance in the ethical sense of renouncing and turning away, not in the sense of emotional eruption. It is a privilege in which to rejoice just as a researcher rejoices when he discovers and corrects an error of his own.

I discussed this phase of my problem in *The Motives of Men* (New York, 1928), 246-251, in a manner that substantially repre-

sents my present thinking. The sickness of today's civilization would not have occurred if our culture had appreciated the privilege of this kind of repentance. There has been, and there increasingly is a general clogging of the ducts of self-criticism. By "the ducts of self-criticism" I mean both inner processes of self-judgment, and outward agencies that express and promote them, such as published organs of information and appraisal.

## VI

The qualities that we have found in men of science, philosophers, theologians, inventors, artists and religious prophets appear also in the great strugglers for civil liberties, political rights, sex equality, and full recognition of personality regardless of color, national origin, religion, and political alignment. All these strugglers exalt personality. In this area a temptation arises that is parallel to that of a parent who shrinks from the mental weaning of a child. Just as many an affectionate parent endeavors indefinitely to do and decide for his child instead of making him competent to do and decide for himself, many privileged individuals and groups that are generously inclined towards other races and classes undertake to do and decide for them instead of promoting in them competency and determination to do and decide for themselves. In other words, a fallacious superiority complex is nourished by one's goodness! Only by rising out of superiority complexes can men and nations demonstrate what it is to be a person.

## VII

Being a middle-class intellectual, I might be expected to let these references to gifted personalities suffice as my index to what is most worth while. But they are not a sufficient index. My attention has been attracted to our prisons ever since the first world war — increasingly attracted to them because they increasingly immure persons who accept pain and ignominy rather than do disrespect to themselves as persons. I refer to conscientious objectors; to the "Hollywood Ten"; to eleven leaders of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee; to Richard Morford, Executive Secretary of the National Council



of American-Soviet Friendship; to others like these, and I do not forget that still others, not yet in prison, have exhibited the same determination to maintain the integrity of their personality. I do not here pass judgment upon the social policies of any of these persons. But when I behold men accepting this cost of living as self-respecting personalities, I stand in awe, and the smoothness of my own career humbles me.

### VIII

Is any light upon my problem to be discerned in what is sometimes called the "mass man"? "Your people, Sir, is a great beast," quotes Carl Sandburg from an early American aristocrat (*The People, Yes*, 28f.). For many years I have looked upon the labor movement as expressing more fully than anything else that is known to me what humanity is like when it does not wear its Sunday clothes. The labor movement below its surface is a mass movement towards a mass affirmation that human beings are persons. Over against all the crude conduct that bestrews the history of the labor conflict stands the indisputable fact that the movement is towards the extension of culture in the good sense of this term. The maintenance of the family; the education of children; security against the degenerative influence of unemployment, and against the preventable ills of sickness and old age; leisure, and participation in the determination of one's earthly destiny — towards all these the workers have been moving by virtue of powers within themselves. Moreover, they have given noteworthy support to universal education. The American Federation of Labor has a remarkable record for support of enlightened policies in our public schools. Though the American labor movement has been disinclined towards social philosophizing, it has all these characteristics.

In parts of the world where social philosophy plays a considerable part in the labor movement, especially where the influence of Karl Marx is strong, production tends to be conceived as a function of society as a whole rather than as a function of parts of society that are required or induced to serve the

whole. That every normal adult should be a producer; that leisure classes are parasitic, and that it is unmanly to belong to one of them; that the production of ponderable goods and the production of intellectual, scientific, and esthetic goods are properly inseparable from each other; that recreation should be neither a flight from today's labor nor a march towards tomorrow's labor, but a primary activity like the arts — there are developing phases of this view of production. Within the whole is an assumption that action as a person includes a mechanical factor. And it really does, a western tradition to the contrary notwithstanding. An act of thinking or choosing, considered as an event and not abstractly, includes motion — neural, glandular, and muscular.

In these remarks about the labor movement I have not been straying from my theme. Labor, though it is regarded in Genesis as a curse, has been one of the main humanizing, civilizing, and moralizing influences of all time. In what I have described I perceive this influence approaching one of its focal points. What is taken to be most worthwhile is undergoing a partial reversal in many, many minds besides my own. To me it is obvious that this reversal gears in with the truth that personality is inherently inter-personal; that unrestricted questioning by the inter-personal processes of science is an ultimate value; that the flow of ultimate values is through unrestricted revision of our valuations; and that this self-in-society which is a society-in-selves is itself a fountainhead of ultimate values. This judgment of mine is not dependent upon either the economic theories of Marx or the political theories that his most vocal followers are endeavoring to put into practice. My conclusion is that among the things that are worthwhile is the experience of being a producer within an unrestricted fellowship of producers. Making private profits out of the labor of other men does not attain this level of value, and it never can, whatever improvement in standards of living it makes possible for any segment of the population. Production for private profit treats as separable in man what is inseparable. It is production

for mechanical ends, the adding of material possessions to material possessions. This is hypertrophy of the mechanical phase of personality.

## IX

Now I come to the sort of mysticism that I have referred to as transcending all isms. A short time ago, the American Friends Service Committee presented to the USSR twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of streptomycin, and the gift was accepted. These Quakers were following what they call the "inner light." Whatever the inner light may be or not be, it led them beyond the darkness that envelops the world today. They emerged into the light of unqualified goodwill or ethical love, outward-acting as well as inwardly inspiring, free, unrestrained by public opinion, custom, and fear. These Americans conducted themselves as persons, and they assumed that Russians are persons. There is ground for a surmise that "they builded better than they knew" in that their political ideas were transcended and perhaps partly contradicted by their magnificent conduct.

This going the whole length with respect, active love, and drive toward community is what makes Jesus irresistible. His thinking about nature, history, and God is not irresistible, and of course theologies that are based upon it are not. But his love, even for enemies, adds to the value of life what nothing seems able to take away. When Paul says that love never fails I take his meaning to be that it never accepts any of its many defeats as final; that it never surrenders any ground, however long the full control of it may be delayed. The realization of self in and through such love of others is a realization of "the blessed community" of which Royce and Jesus speak. It is to experience what is most of all worthwhile.

## X

There is a relation between ethical love and conjugal love that determines one of the things that are most worth while. Human mating is a mating of persons. A person is not a bundle of desires and aversions, but one who, having desires and aversions, is capable,

or can become capable of supervising them. The supervision of them by each of them by each of the mates in the interest of the personality in both of them, and in the interest of other persons, those yet to be born included, can put sex interest upon the highest plane of satisfaction, and even of romance. On the other hand, desire to absorb another individual, or willingness to be absorbed; humoring or exalting one's own emotions or the emotions of another; making sport-bargain decisions and trying to believe that they are for life—these make for defeat of individual and social ends that are of most worth.

This is not an expression of nostalgia for the old ways. The old ways were the ways of sex inequality, autocratic rule in the family, concealment of truth, and mis-education of the young. Now that we have all this to undo, a portentous proportion of our people are letting go the old ways without seizing the dazzling opportunity that our fathers missed seeing—the enrichment of affection at all its stages by making it an expression of one's own developing personality, and a help to personality development in the other.

Imagined voices are asking whether communion with God is not the most worthwhile of all things. If this question refers to an experience that is separable from or independent of what I have described as most worthwhile, the answer is that I have had no such separate or independent experience. My upbringing and my immediate environment led me to look for such individualistic divine communion, and inner states that seemed to move in this direction were cultivated. But the reliable residue of these procedures was confrontation by some of the very same values that I have pointed out in this essay. There was something about *them* that was self-sustaining, as nothing else in the experience was. As I have said, my "leanings" remained fresh and unendingly renewable. They became for me the area in which the idea of God acquired its most satisfactory meaning.

In "My Own Little Theater" (*Religion in Transition*, 92-97), I have related how the

Darwinian controversy started me in this conscious direction. I judge that the most significant turning point in my life, religiously considered, was this early turning away from dogmatic method to scientific method. Devotion to truth ascertained by scientific method became a feature of my personal religion. As I review the "most worthwhiles" of the present essay, I realize that in describing them I have already described my communion with God.

Of course the meaning of God has changed for me, as it has changed for at least a large minority of those who are recognized as religious. How could the idea fail to become fluid when the experienced values that give meaning to life have grown fluid? These values are "becomings," obviously so; they are capable of going on from more to more, or backward from less to less. They are reflected backward towards origins and forward towards destinies in any idea of the world order that we can entertain. The world order is a kind to bring forth these worthwhiles.

It brings them forth within, and partly by means of processes some of which are otherwise valueless, and some of which interfere with and defeat values. How deep within the universe this contrast between values and non-values goes is one of the ever-living questions. One recent philosopher of religion expressed the idea that God is the personality-producing force in the universe. Another philosopher of religion has taken the totality of our highest social values as the content of the idea of the divine. The growth of values is taken by another as the divine reality. Still others conceive of the divine being as encountering and presumably wrestling with a "given" somewhat as we do, and at last the idea of a growing God has arrived. All these views, together with views that contradict them, are to me of secondary importance. The overwhelmingly important thing is the performance of the distinctive functions of personality. Here are all the things that are most worth while.

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